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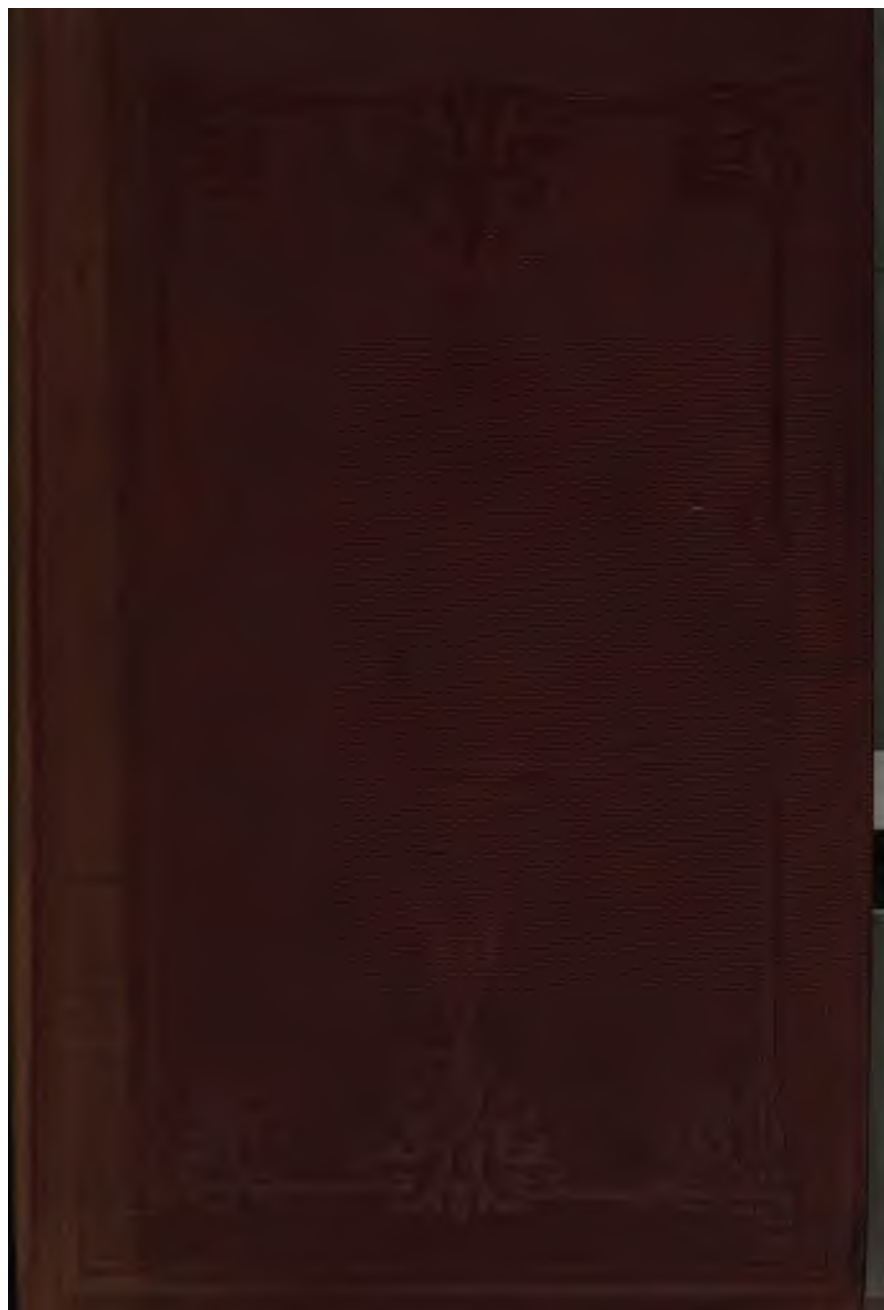
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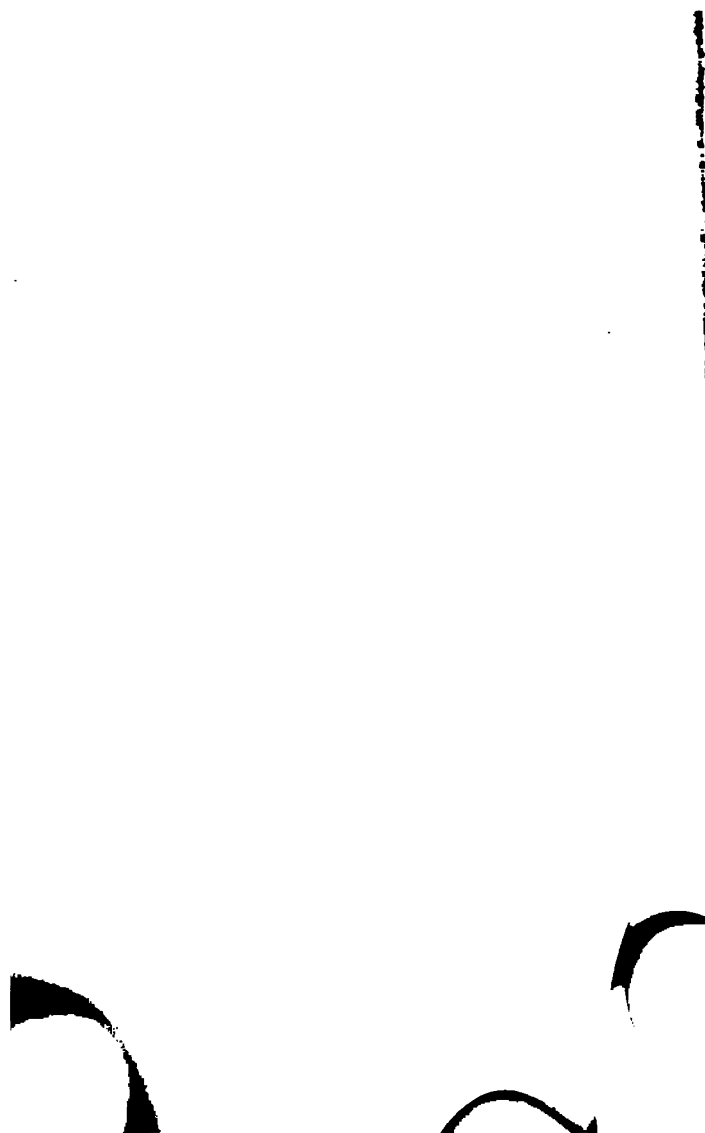






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GEORGE;

OR,

THE PLANTER OF THE ISLE OF FRANCE.

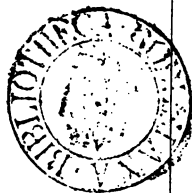
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

AUTHOR OF THE "COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO," ETC.

BY

G. J. KNOX, Esq.



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GEORGE;
OR,
THE PLANTER OF THE ISLE OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ISLE OF FRANCE.



HAVE you never, dear reader, during one of those long, cold, melancholy winter's evenings, when, alone, with no companion save your own thoughts, you have heard the wind whistling along the corridors, and the rain beating against the windows of your dwelling—have you never, I say, on such an occasion, felt a sensation of disgust creeping over you at the thoughts of our sombre climate, our damp and muddy Paris, whilst in imagination you were transported to some enchanted oasis, carpeted with verdure and full of freshness, where you could, in whatever season of the year it might be, on the banks of a limpid and sparkling stream, reclining at the foot of a palm-tree under the shade of the Jameroses, lull yourself by degrees to rest, in a mingled sensation of happiness, of languor, and repose?

Well! this paradise that you have dreamed of, exists, this Eden which you have coveted awaits you, this rivulet which is to cradle your siesta, falls in a cas-

cade of living waters, scattering abroad its spray like sparkling diamond dust; the palm-tree, which is to shelter your repose, abandons to the sea breeze its long and flexile leaves, which seem like some giant's plume. The Jameroses, covered with their rainbow-tinted fruits, offer you their odorous shade. Follow me! come!

Come with me to Brest, that warlike sister of the commercial Marseilles—that armed sentinel which watches over the ocean, and there, among the hundreds of vessels you see riding at anchor in its port, choose one of those long, black, low-hulled brigantines, whose light sails, tall raking masts, and tapering spars, recall to mind those piratical cruisers which that rival of Scott, the poetical romancer of the deep, delights to launch forth upon the waters. We are now in September,—the month the most propitious for long voyages. Step on board the vessel to whose frail planks we have confided our common destiny, let us leave summer behind us, and flee away in search of spring. Adieu, Brest! farewell, Nantes!—Bayonne—France—adieu!

See you, on our right, that giant, whose granite head, elevated to a height of 12,200 feet above the level of the sea, over which it seems suspended, appears lost in a canopy of clouds, while, through the transparent element you can distinguish its base buried deep in the waters? It is the peak of Teneriffe, it is the ancient Nivaria, the rendezvous of all the eagles of the ocean, which you may behold wheeling around their eyries, while to your eyes they appear no larger than doves. But let us proceed, this is but the garden of Spain, and I have promised you the garden of the world.

See you on our left that naked and barren rock, incessantly scorched by a tropical sun? It is the rock on which, for six long years, lay chained the modern Prometheus; it is the pedestal on which England with her own hands has erected a monument of her shame; it is the pendant to the stake of Joan of Arc, and the scaffold of Mary Stuart; it is the political Golgotha, which for eighteen years was the pious rendezvous of

all vessels. But this is not yet the spot to which I lead you. Let us proceed; we have no longer any tie existing to bind us to this arid shore; the regicide St. Helena is widowed of her martyr's relics.

Behold us off the Cape of Storms! See you that mountain which rears aloft its head through the mist; it is the giant Adamartor, the same which appeared to the author of the *Lusiade*. We are passing before the extremity of the earth—that point which stretches forth its arm towards us is the prow of the world. Behold how furiously, yet with what impotent rage the ocean lashes itself against the rock-bound shore; for the vessel against which it beats, fears not the tempest; it makes sail for the port of Eternity, and has Providence itself for its pilot. Let us proceed, for beyond these verdant mountains we should find but arid lands and sun-scorched deserts. Let us proceed—I have promised you limpid waters, and refreshing shades, fruits for ever ripening, and flowers that never fade!

Hail to the Indian Ocean, towards whose magic shores the western breeze impels us! hail to the theatre of the Arabian Nights!—we approach the termination of our voyage. Behold the melancholy Bourbon, devoured by an eternal volcano. Let us bestow a glance upon its flames and a smile upon its perfumes; then we must run a few more knots yet, and, passing between the Isle Plate and the Coin de Mire, double Gunner's Point; let us hoist our colours and cast anchor, the roadstead is safe, and our bark, wearied with its long voyage, demands repose. Besides, we have arrived; for this spot—this island which we see before us—is the happy land which nature seems to have hidden at the confines of the world, even as a jealous mother hides from profane regards the virgin beauty of her child—this is the promised land, the land of our dreams; 'tis the pearl of the Indian Ocean! 'tis the Isle of France!

And now, chaste daughter of the sea, twin sister of Bourbon, fortunate rival of Ceylon, permit me to raise a corner of thy veil in order to show thy beauties to

the foreign friend, the brother voyager who accompanies me! Let me unloose thy zone, oh! beautiful captive! for we are two pilgrims from France, and perhaps one day France may be able to repurchase thee—rich child of India—at the price of some poor kingdom of Europe!

And you, reader, who have with eye and thought so far followed us on our journey, let me now describe to you this marvellous country, with its ever fertile meads, its double harvest, its year formed of springs and summers which unceasingly follow and replace each other, enchaining the flowers to the fruits and the fruits to the flowers. Let me describe to you this poetic isle which bathes its feet in the sea, and hides its head in the clouds—this second Venus, sprung like its sister from the billows' foam, and which ascends from its liquid cradle to its celestial empire, ever crowned with sparkling days and starry nights, those eternal beauties which it has received from the hand of a bountiful Creator, and of which the English have not yet succeeded in depriving it.

Come, then, and if aërial excursions affright you no more than those by sea, seize, like a second Cleophas, the skirt of my mantle, and I will transport you along with me to the summit of the Peter Bot—after the piton of the Black River the highest mountain in the isle—and there, arrived at our destination, we will gaze around us on all sides—to the right and to the left—before and behind—above and beneath us.

Above our heads, as you see, is an ever-tranquil heaven, studded with myriads of stars; it is an azure canopy, o'ersprinkled with a golden dust, of which each atom is a world! Beneath, we behold the entire island stretched at our feet, like a geographical chart of a hundred and eighty kilometres in circumference, with its sixty rivers, which, viewed from this elevation, appear like so many silver threads chaining the sea around the coast, and its thirty mountains plumed with woods of mat, taka-maka, and palm-trees. Among all these rivers you may distinguish the cascades of the

Reduit and the Fountain, which, from amidst the woods from whence they take their rise, dart forth in innumerable streams, and at the mad gallop of their cataracts, proceed, with a never-ending murmur, like the sound of a far-off storm, to join the sea which awaits them, and which, calm or in commotion, replies to their defiance at one time with disdain, at another with anger—waging an eternal contest to determine which will cause in the world the most destruction and the most noise. Then, contrasted with this mistaken ambition you may behold the great Black River, whose fertilizing waters roll tranquilly onwards, seeming to impress its respected name on all that surrounds it, and exhibiting thus the triumph of wisdom over brute force, of calmness over passion. Among all these mountains, see again Mount Brabant, that gigantic sentinel placed upon the northern point of the isle, to defend it against the attacks of an enemy, and to break the fury of the waves. See the piton of the Trois Mamelles, at the base of which flow the Tamarind and Rampart rivers, as if the Indian Isis had sought in every respect to justify her appellation. Lastly, behold the Thumb, after the Peter Bot on which we stand, the most majestic peak in the island, and which seems to raise a hand to heaven as if to point out to master and slave, that there is above them a tribunal which will one day render justice to both.

Before us is Port-Louis, formerly Port-Napoleon, the capital of the island, with its numerous wooden houses, its two rivulets, which, at every storm, become torrents, its "Isle de Tonneliers," which defends the approaches of the harbour, and its strange mixed population, which seems as if it presented a specimen of every people of the earth—from the indolent Creole, who must be borne in his palanquin if he desires but to cross the street, and for whom the exertion of speaking is so great a fatigue, that he has trained his slaves to obey his gestures—to the negro, who is driven by the whip every morning to his labour, and is reconducted by

the whip in the evening to his rest. Between these opposite extremities of the social scale, you may behold the green and red-capped lascars—easily distinguished by their turbans which never vary from these two colours, and by their bronze features—a mixture of the Malay and Malabar; the Yolloff negroes, of the tall and beautiful race of Senegambia, with their jet-black complexions, their eyes sparkling like carbuncles, and their teeth white as pearls; the dwarfish Chinese, with his flat chest and large shoulders, his bare neck, and long pendant moustachios, his peculiar idiom which no one understands, but who is, nevertheless, dealt with by all—for the Chinaman sells all descriptions of merchandize, follows all trades, exercises all professions, and is, in fact, the Jew of the colony); the copper-coloured Malay, small, vindictive, treacherous, ever forgetful of a kindness, but never of an injury, and selling, like the gipsies, forbidden articles; the Mozambiques, gentle, kind, and stupid, esteemed only for their strength; the Malgaches, active and tricky, with their olive complexions, their flat noses, and large protruding lips, easily distinguished from the negroes of Senegal by the reddish tint of their skins; the Namaquois, tall, athletic, and proud, trained from their childhood to the wild pursuits of tiger and elephant hunting, and who are astonished on being transported to a land where there are no monsters to contend with. Last of all, amid this diversified crowd of natives of all eastern lands, the English officer, stationed in the island or on guard at the port, with his round scarlet jacket, his shakoe, in form of a casket, and his long white duck trowsers, looking down from the pinnacle of his greatness with most supreme contempt alike on creoles and mulattoes, masters and slaves, natives and colonists, speaking but of London, boasting but of England, and esteeming but himself.

Behind us, we perceive Grand Port, formerly Port Imperial, the first establishment of the Dutch settlers but since abandoned by them, because, being situated on the windward side of the island, the same

breeze which carries a vessel into the harbour, prevents its departure. Consequently, after having fallen into ruins, it is at the present day but an insignificant town, —a creek, in which the island schooners seek shelter from the rapacity of the pirates of the Indian Ocean. Between us and the sea, a chain of mountains rear to the sky their forest-crowned summits, amongst whose leafy recesses the runaway slave seeks a refuge from the tyranny of his master; then, contracting our line of vision, we may distinguish, almost under our feet, in the rear of the mountains of the port, Moka, perfumed with the sweets of the aloe, the grenadine, and the cassia—Moka, so ever fresh, that one might suppose it laid aside every evening the treasures of its beautiful attire to deck itself anew the following morning—Moka, which is as lovely every day as the other cantons are on days of festivals—Moka, the garden of this island which we have called the garden of the world!

Let us now resume our first position, and, turning our faces towards Madagascar, cast our eyes to the left: at our feet, beyond Le Reduit, we descry the plains of William, after Moka the most delicious quarter of the isle, terminated towards the plains of Saint Peter by the mountain of the Corps-de-Garde, cut in the form of the crupper of a horse; then, beyond the Trois Mamelles and the great wood, is the quarter of the Savannah, with its sweet-titled rivers—called the River of the Lemon-trees, the Negress-bath, and the Arcade, —with its port, so well defended by the steepness of its coasts, that it is utterly impossible to effect a landing otherwise than as a friend; with its pastures, rivals of those of the plains of Saint-Pierre; with its soil yet virgin as an American solitude; and lastly, in the depths of the wood, its great basin, where are found murenos of a size so gigantic, that they are no longer eels but serpents, and which have been known to drag in and devour stags pursued by the sportsman, and runaway

slaves, who have been so imprudent as to bathe in the waters which they inhabit.

Lastly, turning to the right, we behold the quarter of Le Rampart, crowned by the mountain of La Decouverte, above the summit of which rise the masts of vessels, that, from the elevation at which we view them, appear to our eyes fine and delicate as willow wands. Behold Cape Misfortune, the Bay of the Tombs! behold the church of the Pamplemousses! It was in this quarter that formerly stood the neighbouring cabins of Madame de Latour and Marguerite; it was off Cape Misfortune the *Saint-Geran* was lost; it was in the Bay of the Tombs they discovered the body of a young girl holding a portrait tightly grasped in her hand; it was at the church of the Pamplemousses that, two months after this event, the body of a youth, of almost the same age, was interred side by side with this young girl. But you have already divined the names of these two lovers over whom the same prayers were uttered and whose bodies the same tomb incloses—Paul and Virginia—those two halcyons of the tropics, whose unhappy end, the sea, while murmuring in plaintive echoes on the reefs which surround the coast, seems unceasingly to weep, even as the tigress laments her cubs, destroyed by herself in a transport of rage or in a moment of unbridled jealousy!

And now, whether you traverse the isle from the Passe de Descorne to the south-west, or from Mahebourg to little Malabar, whether you follow the line of the coast or bury yourself at once in the interior, whether you descend the course of rivers or climb the mountain side, whether the brilliant disc of the sun sheds over the plain its glowing rays, or the pale moonbeam silvers with its melancholy light the mountain's brow, you can, should your feet fail you, your head grow heavy, or your eyelids droop, should you, oppressed with the balmy emanations of the Chinese rose, the jessamine of Spain, or the sweet-scented frangipane, feel your senses dissolving

softly away—as in the intoxication of opium—you can, O my companion, yield fearlessly and unresistingly to the deep and exquisite voluptuousness of Indian repose. Couch yourself then upon the dense grass, sleep on in tranquillity and awake without fear, for that slight sound, which, in approaching, causes the foliage to quiver, those two black and sparkling eyes which are fixed upon you, are neither the gliding, stealthy approach of the poisonous boquera of Jamaica, nor the savage eyes of the Bengal tiger. Sleep in tranquillity, and awake without fear: never in this enchanted isle, has echo repeated the sharp hissing of a reptile, nor the nightly howlings of a beast of prey. No; it is a young negress, who puts gently aside the branches of a bamboo, to introduce her pretty head, and gaze with curiosity on the newly-arrived European. Make a sign to her, without even stirring from your couch, and she will gather for you the sweet-flavoured banana, the perfumed mango, or the tamarind; utter but one word, and she will reply to you in her guttural and melancholy voice: “*Mo sella ve mo faire ca que vous vle,*” too happy if a kindly glance or benevolent word repays her for her services. Then she will offer her services as a guide to the dwelling of her master. Follow her, never mind whither she leads you, and when you shall have perceived a pretty house, with an avenue of trees leading to the entrance, and surrounded with flowering shrubs, you may know that you have reached your destination. This is the abode of the planter,—a tyrant or patriarch, according as his disposition is good or bad;—but whether he be one or the other little matters it to you. Enter boldly; seat yourself at the family board; say, “I am your guest;” and then the china plate of the richest description and the most delicately worked pattern, loaded with bananas by the prettiest fingers in the world; the plated goblet, with its crystal stem, and in which sparkles the very best beer to be had in the island, will be placed before you; and as often and as long as you please, you may shoot over the savannahs

of your host with his best fowling-piece; you may fish in his river with his lines and nets; and every time that you come yourself, or that you send a friend in your place, they will kill for you or him the fatted calf; for here, the arrival of a guest is a festival, causing as much happiness and pleasure, as did the return of the prodigal son to the roof of his parent!

Hence, as it may be supposed, the British, ever jealous of France, had, for a long time back, their eyes fixed upon her cherished daughter, hovering unceasingly around her, and seeking, at one time, to seduce her with gold, at another, to intimidate her with menaces; but to all these propositions the lovely creole replied with supreme disdain, insomuch, that it soon became evident that her lovers, unable to obtain her by seduction, sought to carry her off by violence, and that it would be necessary, like a Spanish *monia*, to keep her constantly in sight. For some time she escaped with some unimportant, and, consequently, futile attempts; but at length England, no longer able to contain her passion, cast herself furiously upon her, and, as the Isle of France learned one morning that her sister Bourbon had already been taken, she invited her defenders to exercise over her safety a yet stricter watch than they had already done; while the inhabitants now commenced in earnest to sharpen their knives and prepare their bullets, for every moment the enemy was expected.

On the 23d of August, 1810, a frightful cannonading, which resounded through the entire isle, announced that the long looked-for enemy had at length arrived.

CHAPTER II.

LIONS AND LEOPARDS.

It was about five o'clock in the evening, towards the close of one of those magnificent summer days, which are unknown in our northern climes, that a vast concourse of persons—composing nearly half the population of the Isle of France—disposed in the form of an amphitheatre upon the mountains which command Grand Port, regarded with breathless anxiety the furious combat which raged beneath their feet; as formerly the Romans, from the heights of their circus, looked down upon a fight of gladiators or a combat of martyrs. Only this time, the arena was a vast harbour, surrounded with reefs and shoals, on which the combatants had run themselves aground, in order that they might not shrink from the battle, even should they feel inclined so to do; and, that freed from the embarrassing cares of working their ships, they might give up the whole of their attention to the work of mutual destruction. On this occasion there were no vestals present with upraised fingers to put an end to this terrible game: it was, as all parties well understood, a fight of extermination, a mortal combat; consequently, these ten thousand spectators who, from their lofty position viewed this terrible representation, maintained in their ranks an anxious silence; and the sea, itself, so often turbulent upon this coast, was hushed, as though to prevent a single report of these three hundred cannons from escaping the ears of the people.

This is what occurred.*

On the morning of the 20th of August, Post-captain Duperré on his voyage from Madagascar on board the *Bellona*, and followed by the *Minerve*, the *Victor*, the

* [As the account given in "George" of the engagement at Grand Port seemed to us a little apocryphal, we have consulted several authorities on the subject, and subjoin a statement, taken from the "Pictorial History of England," and "James's Naval History," which differs, in some essential particulars, from that given by M. Dumas. We are far, however, from attributing to the author any intentional mis-statement, as we are aware that the dispatches published at the period in the "Moniteur" (which we presume to be the source from which M. Dumas obtained his information), particularly those relating to naval engagements, were invariably falsified to suit the purposes of Napoleon; insomuch that it was several months before the French nation were informed of the battle of Trafalgar; and even then it was made to appear to them rather as a victory than a defeat.—EDITOR.]

In other quarters of the world our military operations for the year were of some importance. Lord Minto, now Governor-general of India, sent a force of about 1700 Europeans and 2600 sepoys to reduce the Isle of Bourbon and the Isle of France in the Indian Ocean, which, to the great annoyance of our East India trade, had been left in the hands of the French. The whole expedition was put under the management of Lieutenant-colonel Keating, who, with a fleet of ships of war and transports, arrived early in July off the island of Bourbon. Dispositions were made for an attack on St. Denis, the principal town; but the garrison offered to capitulate; and in two or three days the town of St. Paul and the whole island quietly submitted. But the reduction of the larger island—the Mauritius, or Isle of France—was a work of much greater difficulty, and was not effected by Lord Minto's armament without further assistance. A body of troops, partly drawn from the Cape of Good Hope, commanded by Major-general John Abercrombie, and a fleet under Admiral Bertie reached this great island in the month of November. On the 29th the troops effected a landing on a very difficult coast. The French skirmished until our artillery was landed, and preparations were made to attack the forts; but then—on the 3rd of December—they capitulated upon terms dictated to them. The garrison

Ceylon, and the Windham, had recognised the windward mountains of the Isle of France. As three previous combats, in all of which he had been conqueror, had caused serious injury to his fleet, he had then resolved

was to be sent to France; but the whole of the island, with a vast quantity of stores and produce, 5 large frigates and some smaller ships of war, 28 merchantmen, and 2 captured English East Indiamen, was surrendered. This island, by far the most valuable of the remaining French possessions to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, thus became a permanent British possession.—*Pictorial History of England*.

In one of our naval adventures we sustained a severe check and a very serious loss. In the month of August, after the reduction of the isle of Bourbon, but before the conquest of the isle of France, four of our frigates made rather an inconsiderate dash into Grand Port, the principal harbour of the isle of France, wherein lay two of our captured East Indiamen, which have been mentioned above, four French frigates, a corvette, and a brig, aided and protected by heavy land batteries. Access to the port was very difficult. Two of our frigates ran aground upon shoals, not known to the pilots, and were abandoned and burned by their crews. Our third frigate, the "Nereide," Captain Nesbit Willoughby, fought the enemy alone for more than five hours, and drove the whole of the enemy's ships on shore in a heap. But Captain Willoughby, who, before this time, had been much battered about, and had received more desperate wounds than any living man in the service, was awfully mangled, and had his left eye torn out of the socket by a splinter; his first lieutenant lay mortally and his second dangerously wounded, and nearly every man of the crew was either killed or wounded: the "Nereide's" quarter-deck guns were nearly all dismantled, several of her main-deck guns were dismantled also, the hull of the ship was shattered, she was striking the ground astern, and the frigate which remained afloat, the "Iphigenia," could not get her assistance. Including marines and some artillery of the Madras establishment, the "Nereide" had on board 281 men: of this number about 95 were killed and 135 wounded. In this condition Captain Willoughby struck to the enemy. By this and some former exploits on these islands, he contributed to the conquest of this very important colony. The "Iphigenia," closely blockaded, was taken soon afterwards. Thus we lost, in a single enterprise, four frigates; but, through the noble behaviour of Willoughby, and his officers and crew, the defeat was more glorious than many a victory, and the loss of ships was scarcely considered a misfortune.—*James's Naval History*.

to put into Grand Port for the purpose of repairing damages. This determination appeared so much the more easy to be carried into execution, since, as every one well knew, the island at this epoch still belonged to France, and the tri-coloured flag floating upon the fort of the Isle of the Pass, and on a three-masted ship anchored beneath its walls, gave to Captain Duperré the assurance of being received by friends. Captain Duperré, consequently, gave orders that the squadron should double the Isle of the Pass, and in order the better to execute this manœuvre, directed that the corvette, the Victor, should proceed first, that the Minerve, the Ceylon, and the Bellona, should follow her, and that the rear-guard should be brought up by the Windham. In this order, then, did the flotilla advance, each ship following the preceding one, the narrowness of the passage rendering it impossible for two vessels to sail abreast.

When the Victor was within gunshot distance of the ship lying under the fort, the latter signalled that the English were cruising in sight of the island. Captain Duperré replied that he was well aware of the fact, and that the fleet which they had perceived in the offing, was composed of the Magician, the Nereid, the Sirius, and the Iphigenia, commanded by Commodore Lambert; but that, as on his side Captain Hamelin was stationed to leeward of the island with L'Entreprenant, La Manche, and L'Astreé, they were strong enough to accept the combat should the enemy present himself.

A few seconds afterwards, Captain Bouvet, who proceeded second in the line, fancied he observed certain hostile demonstrations on board the vessel which had just signalled. Moreover, after having examined her minutely in all points with that piercing glance which so rarely deceives a sailor, he felt convinced that she did not belong to the French navy. He imparted his suspicions to Captain Duperré, who directed him to take his measures accordingly, and assured him, that on his side he should exercise the strictest precautions. As to

the Victor, having got too far in, it was impossible to warn her of her danger, since every signal made, would have been seen by the fort and the suspected vessel.

The Victor, therefore, having all her crew on deck, continued to advance without mistrust, impelled by a gentle breeze from the south-east, while the two vessels which followed her, regarded with anxiety the motions of the three-masted ship and the fort; both, however, still maintained their friendly appearance, and the two vessels which were now nearly abreast of each other, even exchanged some words. The Victor continued her way and had already passed the fort, when all at once a line of smoke issued from the side of the vessel at anchor, and from the battery above. Forty-four pieces of cannon opened their fire at once, raking the French corvette, cutting up her sails and rigging, carrying away her fore-top mast, and committing vast havoc among her crew, while at the same moment, the French colours disappeared from the fort and frigate, and gave place to the British union-jack. The French had been the dupes of a stratagem, and had fallen into a trap.

But in place of retracing his steps, which he would have been yet able to effect, by abandoning to her fate the corvette which served as a pilot-boat, and which, recovered from surprise, replied to the fire of the frigate with its two carronades—Captain Duperré made a signal to the Windham, which immediately stood out to sea, and directed the Minerve, and the Ceylon, to force the entrance. He himself meant to support them while the Windham should proceed to inform the rest of the French fleet of the situation in which the four vessels found themselves placed.

These dispositions taken, the vessels continued to advance—no longer with the false security of the Victor—but with lighted matches, each man at his post, and in that profound silence which ever precedes a great crisis. The Minerve soon found herself broadside on with the enemy's frigate, but this time it was she who commenced the engagement: twenty-two guns opened upon

the enemy at once; the broadside took effect on the hull of a portion of her bulwarks flew into pieces; a few stifled cries were heard, and then in its turn, the English vessel discharged a broadside, and hurled back to the Minerve the messengers of death which she had received from her, whilst the artillery of the fort, on their side, let loose upon her all the strength of their battery, but without doing any mischief, farther than killing a few men and cutting up some of the rigging.

Then came the Ceylon, a pretty twenty-gun brig, taken, as well as the Victor, the Minerve, and the Windham, a few days before from the English, and which, like them, was about to fight for France, her new mistress. She advanced, light and graceful as a sea-mew skimming along the surface of the deep. Then, as she passed the fort and the three-masted ship, the three batteries at the same moment opened their fire, confounding their reports in one loud roar, so nearly had they fired together, while so close were they to each other that the smoke of the different guns mingled together into one common cloud.

There still remained Captain Duperré commanding the Bellona, already, at this epoch, justly esteemed as one of the bravest and most skilful officers of the French navy. He, in turn, stood into the harbour, hugging in his passage the isle of the Pass closer than any of the other vessels had done, then, when close to the hostile frigate, broadside to broadside, they exchanged their fire at pistol-shot range. The pass was now forced, and the four men-of-war were in the port; they all brought up together off the Aigrettes, and cast anchor between the Ile aux Singes, and the Point of the Colony.

Immediately on his arrival, Captain Duperré put himself in communication with the city, from whence he learned that the Isle of Bourbon had fallen, but that in spite of their attempts on the Isle of France, the enemy had only succeeded in taking possession of the Isle of the Pass. A courier was forthwith dispatched to the brave General Decaen, governor of the island, to inform

him that the four French ships of war, the *Victor*, *Minerve*, *Ceylon*, and *Bellona*, were at Grand Port. At noon, on the 21st, General Decaen received the dispatch, and transmitted it to Captain Hamelin, who gave immediate orders to the ships under his command to get under way without loss of time, forwarded overland a reinforcement of men to Captain Duperré, and assured him that he would do all in his power to come as quickly as possible to his assistance, as he was led to believe from private information he had received, that he would speedily be menaced by a superior force.

In fact, the *Wyndham*, when endeavouring to anchor in the Black River at four o'clock on the morning of the 21st, had been captured by the English frigate the *Sirius*. Captain Pym, who commanded her, had then learned that four French ships of war under the command of Captain Duperré, had entered Grand Port, where they were detained by contrary winds; he had forthwith issued orders to the captains of the *Magician* and *Iphigenia*, and the three frigates had made all sail for the destination pointed out, the *Sirius* taking the leeward side of the island, while the two other frigates beat up to windward to attain the same point.

These were the movements which Captain Hamelin had seen, and which, coupled with the private information he had received, had given him reason to believe that Captain Duperré was about to be attacked. He himself then used every exertion to get his ships in readiness, but with all the diligence he could possibly exert, the morning of the 22d had dawned before he was ready for sea. The three English frigates had accordingly three hours' advance of him, and the wind, which was fixed at south-east, and freshening every moment, augmented still further the difficulties which lay in his way before he could make Grand Port.

On the evening of the 21st, General Decaen left Port Louis on horseback, and at five o'clock the following morning, reached Maheburg, followed by the principal colonists and by those among their slaves on

whose fidelity they could the most fully rely. Masters and slaves were armed with muskets, and in case the English should attempt to land, fifty rounds of ball cartridge were served out to each. Immediately on General Decaen's arrival an interview took place between him and Captain Duperré.

At twelve o'clock that day, the English frigate, the *Sirius*, which had passed to leeward of the island, and, consequently, had experienced less difficulty in her passage than the two other frigates, appeared off the entrance of the Pass, and signalled the frigate at anchor beneath the fort, which had been made out to be the *Nereid*, Captain Willoughby; and both, as though they had determined to attack, alone, the French squadron, advanced upon them, taking the same course as the latter had previously done; but in hugging the shore too closely, the *Sirius* went aground, and the day elapsed ere her crew succeeded in getting her afloat.

During the night the reinforcement of sailors, despatched overland by Captain Hamelin, arrived, and was distributed through the four French ships of war, who could thus muster nearly 1,400 fighting men and 142 guns; but as soon as the division of men had been made, Captain Duperré having grounded the squadron, each ship presented her broadside to the enemy, and the half only of these guns could be brought to bear on the hostile force in the bloody engagement which was about to ensue.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, the frigates *Magician* and *Iphigenia* appeared in their turn off the entrance of the pass; they signalled the *Sirius* and *Nereid*, and all four advanced against the enemy. Two ran themselves aground, the other two anchored, presenting a total of 1,700 men and 200 guns.

A terrible moment was that, during which the ten thousand spectators that lined the hills beheld the four hostile frigates, without a single sail being set, impelled solely by the breeze acting on their spars and rigging, advancing slowly, but with that confidence which supe-

riority of numbers ever inspires, to range themselves within half-cannon shot of the French division, presenting in turn their broadsides to the foe, running themselves aground as the French also had done, and renouncing beforehand all idea of flight, as the enemy had also renounced it.

It was therefore, indeed, a fight of extermination which was about to commence. Lions and leopards were face to face, and about to rend each other with teeth of bronze and roarings of fire.

It was the French sailors who, less patient than their fellow-countrymen, the guards, had been at Fontenoy, gave the signal for the carnage. A long train of smoke ran along the sides of the four ships, from whose peaks floated the tri-coloured flag; then, at the same moment, the roaring of seventy pieces of cannon bellowed across the waters, and a perfect hurricane of fire burst over the British fleet.

Nor was the enemy backward in replying to the invitation; and then, without other manœuvre, save that of clearing the decks of the fragments of timber, and the bodies of the expiring sailors which encumbered them—without any other science being displayed save that of aiming true—without any longer interval than the time occupied in charging and recharging the guns—there commenced one of those fights of extermination which, since the days of Aboukir and Trafalgar, the annals of the naval service had not witnessed. In the beginning of the engagement, the advantage might have been supposed to have been on the side of the British, for their first broadsides had cut away the lanyards and rigging of the *Minerve* and the *Ceylon*; so that, by this accident, the fire of these two ships being masked by the falling cordage, was in a great measure rendered ineffectual. But under the orders of its gallant commander, the *Bellona* showed a front to all, replying to the four ships at the same time, having arms, powder, shot for all, unceasingly vomiting forth its fire, like a volcano during an eruption, and that, too, during the

space of two hours—that is to say, until the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* had cleared away their wreck and repaired their damages; after which, as if impatient of their inaction, they recommenced biting and roaring in their turn, forcing the enemy, who had turned away from them for a few moments in order to crush the *Bellona*, again to resume the fight with them, and by this means re-establishing the unity of the combat throughout the entire line.

At this juncture, it seemed to Captain Duperré that the *Nereid*, already severely injured by the three broadsides she had received from the French division when forcing the pass, began to slacken her fire. The order was immediately issued for all the ships to direct their fire upon her without any intermission. For upwards of an hour they crushed her under a constant shower of grape and round shot, believing every moment that she would strike her colours; then as she still persisted in keeping them flying, the iron shower continued, mowing down masts and spars, sweeping her decks, riddling her hull, until her last gun gave forth its final report, like an expiring sigh, and the noble ship lay like a log on the water in all the silence and immobility of death.

At this moment, and as Captain Duperré was giving an order to his first lieutenant Roussin, he was wounded in the head by a grape shot, and fell in the battery. Aware that he was dangerously, if not mortally wounded, he sent for Captain Bouvet, entrusted to his hands the command of the *Bellona*, and gave him orders to blow up the four ships rather than suffer them to fall into the hands of the enemy; this last recommendation given, he took Bouvet's hand in his, pressed it, and fainted. No one perceived this event; Duperré had not quitted the *Bellona* since Bouvet had replaced him.

At ten o'clock the darkness was so great that the combatants could no longer see to point the guns, and were obliged to fire at hazard. At eleven the fire on both sides ceased; but as the spectators were aware that

this cessation of hostility was but momentary, they remained at their posts. In fact, at one o'clock the moon rose, and by the aid of her pale light the combat was once more renewed.

During this momentary lull in the engagement, the Nereid had received some reinforcements, and five or six of her guns had been replaced in their former positions. The frigate whom all parties had imagined to be dead was but in an expiring state; she resumed her senses, and now gave the first signs of returning animation by attacking the enemy anew.

Seeing this, Bouvet dispatched Lieutenant Roussin on board the Victor, whose captain was wounded, with orders to get the ship afloat and to proceed at all risks to crush the Nereid under the weight of his fire, giving him directions not to leave her until she should be silenced effectually and for ever.

Roussin followed his orders to the letter: the Victor set her jib and maintopsail, moved from her position, and cast anchor within twenty paces of the poop of the Nereid without firing a shot; then, from the position she had taken up, she commenced her fire, raking the enemy fore and aft at each broadside, to which the latter could reply with her stern chasers only. At daylight the frigate was again silenced. This time it was, indeed, the silence of death, and yet the union-jack still floated from her peak. She was dead, but she had not struck!

At this moment, cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" were heard on board the Nereid; the seventeen French prisoners which she had made in the Isle of the Pass, and who had been placed in confinement in the hold, had succeeded in breaking loose from their prison, and now darted up the hatchway, bearing with them a tri-coloured flag. The standard of England was hauled down, and the tri-colour floated in its place. Lieutenant Roussin now gave orders to board, but at the moment when he was about to fix the grappling-irons, the enemy directed its fire upon the Nereid, which thus escaped him. It was a useless combat to sustain; the Nereid was no longer

anything but a lifeless hulk, on which he could easily put his hands when the other ships should be reduced; the Victor consequently left the English frigate floating on the water like the body of a dead whale, and having embarked the seventeen prisoners, proceeded to resume her place in the line, and announced to the English, by a broadside, that she had returned to her post.

The order had been given for all the French ships to concentrate their fire upon the Magician, Captain Bouvet's design being to crush the hostile frigates in detail; consequently, towards three o'clock in the afternoon, the Magician had become the target at which all shots were aimed;—at five o'clock she no longer replied to our fire save by a few heavy lurches, like the difficult breathing of a mortally wounded enemy, and at six o'clock, they perceived, from the heights above the town, that the crew were making preparations to abandon her; by shouts at first, and afterwards by signals, they warned the French division of the fact, and the fire was redoubled; the two other hostile frigates now sent their boats to its assistance; she herself launched her own boats; the remnant of the crew, either unwounded men or those but slightly hurt, descended the side and pushed off; but in the interval which took place before she could gain the Sirius, two boats were sunk by the French fire, and the sea was in an instant covered with men seeking to gain by swimming the two neighbouring frigates.

An instant afterwards, a light smoke was seen issuing from the starboard side of the Magician, which every moment became more and more dense; then, ascending the hatchways, might be seen the bodies of the wounded and dying, who, dragging themselves with difficulty along, raised their mutilated arms to heaven, crying aloud for succour; for already was flame succeeding to smoke, and darting through every opening of the devoted ship its ardent tongues. It climbed aloft, running along the quarter netting, ascending the masts, enveloping in its fiery embrace the yards and rigging, while in the midst of this flame were heard alternate curses and

prayers, and screams of rage or agony; at length, all at once, the ship opened like the crater of a volcano, tearing itself asunder. A frightful explosion was heard. The Magician flew into the air in a thousand pieces. The horror-stricken spectators followed with their eyes, for a time, these burning fragments, which, after careering for a brief space in their aerial flight, dropped one by one into their watery bed, where they were for ever extinguished. Of that beautiful frigate which, the evening before, had fancied herself the queen of the ocean, not a particle was left—not even a plank—not even the wounded—not even the dead. A wide space left void between the Nereid and the Iphigenia, alone indicated the position she had occupied.

Then, as though fatigued with the combat, or terrified with the spectacle they had witnessed, English and French alike kept silence, and the remainder of the night was dedicated to repose. But at daylight hostilities were renewed. This time it was the Sirius that the French division had chosen for its victim. It was the Sirius whom the combined fire of the Victor, the Minerve, the Bellona, and the Ceylon were about to crush. It was upon her devoted head that grape and round shot were now hurled. At the end of two hours not a single mast was standing; her bulwarks were shot away level with the decks; the water poured into her hull through twenty apertures; and had she not been already stranded she must have sunk. Then, in their turn, the crew abandoned her; the captain was the last to quit the deck. But, as on board the Magician, a fire had also been left on board the Sirius; a lighted train conducted it to the powder magazine, and at eleven o'clock in the morning, a tremendous explosion was heard, and the Sirius disappeared beneath the deep!

The Iphigenia, which had hitherto fought at anchor, now found that any further resistance would be in vain. She alone was left against four ships; for, as we have before said, the Nereid was but an inanimate mass; she unfurled her sails, and profiting by the good fortune

which had hitherto preserved her almost intact amid the surrounding destruction, she endeavoured to fly, in order to place herself under the protection of the fort.

Observing this manœuvre, Captain Bouvet gave orders to the *Minerve* and *Bellona* to repair damages, haul off shore, and proceed with all speed in chase. Duperré, on the bloody couch on which he was laid, had learned all that had passed; he was unwilling that one single frigate should escape the carnage—that one single Englishman should fly to announce their defeat to Britain. “We have Aboukir and Trafalgar to revenge!” exclaimed he. “On—on! in chase of the *Iphigenia*!”

And the two noble frigates, shattered as they were, aroused themselves from their inaction, spread their sails, and stood out from land, giving orders to the *Victor* to man the *Nereid*. As to the *Ceylon*, she was in such a mutilated condition that she could not quit her position until her thousand shot-holes had been stopped.

Then loud shouts of triumph ascended from the shore, and all this population, which had hitherto kept silence, now found once more its breath and voice to encourage the *Minerve* and the *Bellona* in their pursuit. But the *Iphigenia*, less damaged than her two enemies, gained visibly upon them in the chase. The *Iphigenia* had already passed the *Isle des Aigrettes*—had reached the fort of the *Pass*—and was about to gain in safety the open sea. Already did the pursuing shot of the *Bellona* and the *Minerve* fall far short of their mark, when all at once, three men-of-war hove in sight off the entrance of the *Pass*, the tri-coloured banner flying at their peaks. It was Captain Hamelin who had thus opportunely arrived from Port Louis with the *Entreprenant*, *La Manche*, and *L’Astrée*. The *Iphigenia* and the fort were thus caught between two fires, and were obliged to yield at discretion—not an Englishman escaped.

During this time, the *Victor* had, for the second time, approached the *Nereid*, and, fearing some surprise, had boarded her with the greatest precaution. But the silence which reigned on board was indeed that of death.

Her decks were strewn with dead bodies, and the lieutenant who first ascended the side and placed his foot on her deck, found himself ankle deep in blood.

A wounded sailor raised himself on his arm, and informed the captors, that six times the orders had been given to strike the colours, but that six times the fire from the French frigates had carried away the men charged to execute this command; that after this the captain had retired to his cabin and had not been seen since.

Lieutenant Roussin then proceeded to the cabin, where he found Captain Willoughby seated before a table, dreadfully wounded and just expiring. In front of him was extended his first lieutenant Thomson, who had been killed by a ball which had pierced his heart, and at his feet lay his nephew, William Murray, wounded in the side by a grape-shot.

On the entrance of Lieutenant Roussin into the cabin, Captain Willoughby, with the hand which was still left him, made a motion as if to give up his sword, but the former, extending his arm in his turn, and putting back the proffered weapon, saluted the dying Englishman.

"Captain Willoughby," said he, "when an officer has wielded a sword as you have done, he renders up his weapon to God alone."

So saying, he hastened to give orders that the utmost exertions should be employed to save the life of the brave commander. But all succours were in vain; the noble defender of the *Nereid* expired the following morning.

But Lieutenant Roussin was more fortunate with respect to the nephew than he had been with the uncle. Lord William Murray, though severely and dangerously, was not however mortally wounded. Consequently we shall see him reappear in the course of this story.

CHAPTER III.

THE THREE CHILDREN.

As may be imagined, the English, although having lost four ships-of-war, had not on that account renounced their projects on the Isle of France; on the contrary, they had now, at the same time, a new conquest to make and an old defeat to avenge. Consequently, scarcely three months after the events which we have placed under the eye of the reader, a second battle, no less obstinate than the first, but very different in its result, took place at Port Louis itself; that is to say, at a point diametrically opposite to that which had been the theatre of the former engagement.

This time it was not merely a force of four ships of war, and eighteen hundred men that was employed. Twelve frigates, eight corvettes, and fifty transports had landed on the coast an army of twenty or five-and-twenty thousand men, and this army of invasion forthwith advanced towards Port Louis, then called Port Napoleon, without a moment's delay.

As may be supposed, the capital of the isle, thus menaced with an attack by a force so imposing, presented an appearance more easily imagined than described. From all quarters of the island crowds of persons flocked into the town, manifesting the most lively agitation; as none knew the real danger, each created some imaginary danger of his own, and the most exaggerated and monstrous recitals were those which obtained the most universal credence. From time to time, an aid-de-camp of the commanding general, might be seen

all at once galloping along, bearing orders to the colonels of the regiments, and scattering among the multitude copies of a proclamation, designed to arouse in the bosoms of the nationals that feeling of hatred which they bore to the English, and to exalt to a still higher pitch the courage and patriotism with which all parties were alike animated. On the reading of these handbills, all hats were simultaneously waved in the air, or raised aloft on the points of bayonets; cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" resounded on every side; oaths to conquer or die were exchanged; and a universal thrill of enthusiasm ran through this crowd, which, from a state of boisterous inaction, passed to a condition of furious activity, and who precipitating themselves from all sides into the public thoroughfares, loudly demanded to be led against the enemy.

But the true rendezvous was at the Place d'Armes, that is to say, in the centre of the city. To this point might be seen proceeding, now a covered ammunition-wagon, drawn at full gallop by a pair of little Timor or Pegu horses, and again, a cannon, dragged along at a foot's pace by a party of national artillerymen—youths of from fifteen to eighteen years of age, with whom the powder which blackened their features, served in place of a beard. To this general meeting-place might also be seen hastening groups of civic guards in martial attire, volunteers, in every description of fanciful costume, who had added a bayonet to their fowling-pieces, and negroes clad in fragments of old uniforms and armed with carbines, while all these motley groups mingling, crossing, and elbowing each other, each individual adding his share of noise to the universal rumour which rose above the city, formed altogether a medley of sounds by no means dissimilar to the humming of a vast swarm of bees hovering above a gigantic hive.

Once arrived, however, upon the Place d'Armes, these men, whether running singly or in groups, assumed a more orderly and regular appearance. Upon the Place d'Armes were stationed, drawn up in line and awaiting

the order to march against the enemy, the half of the garrison of the island, consisting of troops of the line, and forming a total of about fifteen or eighteen hundred men. The attitude of these men, at once proud yet indifferent, seemed a silent reproach to those noisy individuals who, less familiarized with scenes of this description, had yet the courage and good-will to take part in what was going forward; consequently, while the Negroes pressed tumultuously to one end of the place, a party of national volunteers, marshalling themselves after the example of the military discipline which they beheld before them, halted in front of the troops, and formed themselves into line, endeavouring, though unsuccessfully, to imitate the steady and orderly appearance of its ranks.

The individual who appeared to be the leader of this last troop, and who, it must be confessed, took infinite pains to attain the result we have mentioned, was a man of about forty, or five-and-forty years of age, wearing the epaulettes of a field-officer, and endowed by nature with one of those insignificant physiognomies to which no emotion could give what, artistically speaking, we term character. For the rest, he was curled, shaved, and tricked out as if for a parade, and, from time to time he loosened a button of his military coat, buttoned primitively from top to bottom, which, opening little by little, disclosed to view a quilted waistcoat, a shirt with ruffles at the bosom, and a white neckcloth with embroidered ends. Near him, a pretty boy of about twelve years of age, waited on at a few paces' distance by a negro clad in waistcoat and trowsers of white duck, paraded his large frilled shirt collar, his green camlet jacket with silver buttons, and his grey beaver hat ornamented with a feather, with that appearance of ease and internal satisfaction resulting from the consciousness of being well dressed. At his side, hung with its sabretache, the scabbard of a little sword, the blade of which he held in his right hand, endeavouring to imitate, as far as lay in his power, the martial ap-

pearance of the officer, whom he addressed from time to time, in a loud voice, by the title of "Father," an appellation of which our field-officer appeared to be no less proud than of the eminent post in the national militia, to which the confidence of his fellow-citizens had elevated him.

At a short distance from this family group which strutted in all the happiness of satisfied pride, might have been observed another, less brilliant certainly, but most assuredly no less remarkable.

This rival group was composed of a man of between forty-five and forty-eight years of age, and of two boys, one of whom might have numbered fourteen, and the other twelve years.

The man was tall, thin, and bony, his figure slightly bent, not by age, since we have said that he could have numbered at most but eight-and-forty years, but by the humiliation arising from the consciousness of an inferior position. In fact, by the copper-coloured tint of his skin, and his slightly-frizzled hair, a spectator could at the first glance recognise one of those mulattoes, for whose crime of colour, in the colonies, the enormous fortunes they often attain by their industry can never atone. He was clothed with rich and elegant simplicity, held in his hand a carabine inlaid with gold, and armed with a long and pointed bayonet, and wore by his side a cuirassier's sabre, which, thanks to the tallness of his figure, hung suspended along his thigh like a rapier. Moreover, besides those which were contained in his cartouche-box, his pockets were stuffed out with ball-cartridges.

The elder of the two children who accompanied this individual was, as we have before said, a tall active-looking youth of about fourteen years of age, whose complexion his out-of-door sports, yet more than his African origin, had succeeded in embrowning. Thanks to the active life he had led, he was as robust as a youth of eighteen, and had for that reason obtained permission from his father to take part in the action which was

about to commence. He was therefore armed with a double-barrelled fowling-piece, the same which he was in the habit of making use of in his sporting excursions through the isle, and in the use of which he had obtained, young as he was, the reputation of a skill which was envied by the most renowned sportsmen of the neighbourhood. But at this moment his real age showed itself in defiance of his apparent one. He had placed his fowling-piece on the ground, and was engaged in playing with an enormous Malgache dog, who seemed on his side to have repaired to the general rendezvous in case the English should have brought with them some specimens of their race of bull-dogs.

The brother of the young sportsman, and the second son of this individual with the tall figure and humble deportment, he who, in short, completed the group which we have undertaken to describe, was a child of scarcely twelve years of age, whose slender and delicate appearance seemed to bear no relation to the lofty stature of the father, or the powerful organization of his brother, which latter seemed as though he had appropriated to himself the proportion of vigour destined for both. Consequently, the reverse of Jacques, as the elder was named, the little George appeared at least two years younger than he really was, while his slender and delicate figure, his pale, thin, and melancholy features, shaded by his long, black hair, possessed but little of the appearance of that physical force so common to the colonies. But, in return for these defects, a close observer might have read in his restless and penetrating glance, an intelligence so active, and in the precocious contraction of his eyebrows a reflection so virile, and a will so tenacious, that he could not fail to be amazed at meeting with at once so much delicacy and so much power in the same individual.

Not having fire-arms, he clung closely to his father, grasping with all the strength of his little hand the barrel of the beautifully-ornamented carabine borne by his parent, alternately shifting his lively and inquiring

eyes from his father to the field-officer, doubtless asking himself in his own mind how it was that his father, who was twice as rich, twice as brave, twice as strong and active as this man, wore not also like him some honourable badge or peculiar and distinctive order.

A negro, clad in waistcoat and drawers of blue linen, awaited, like the attendant of the child with the frilled collar, until the moment should come when the men would be obliged to march; for then, whilst his father and brother were to proceed to battle, the child was to remain under his charge.

Ever since morning, the distant roar of cannon had been heard; for, early in the morning, General Vaudermalsen with the other half of the garrison had marched towards the enemy, in order to check its advance in the defiles of the long mountains, and at the passages of the Pont-Rouge, and Latanier rivers. In fact, ever since morning he had held his position with the utmost bravery, but unwilling to hazard the safety of his entire forces on one blow, and fearing besides that the attack to which he showed his front, was but a false attack on the part of the English, who, in the mean time, would push on their main body by some other route to Port Louis, he had taken with him but eight hundred men, leaving, as we have before said, the remainder of the garrison and the national volunteers to defend the capital. The consequence was, that, after displaying prodigies of valour, his little band, which was opposed to a body of four thousand British and two thousand sepoys, had been obliged to retire successively from position to position, skilfully profiting by each acclivity, or other accident of ground they met with, in order to keep the enemy in check, though soon obliged by superior forces to retire anew; so that, from the Place d'Armes where the reserves were posted, one could, though the combatants were invisible, pretty fairly calculate the progress of the advancing army of the British, by the increasing roar of the artillery, which every moment approached nearer and nearer; soon

even the sharp rattling of the musketry, might be distinguished between the tremendous volleys of the great guns; but it must in justice be said that these warlike sounds, far from intimidating the defenders of Port Louis, who, condemned to inaction, were stationed on the Place d'Armes, on the contrary but stimulated their courage; insomuch, that, whilst the soldiers of the line, slaves to discipline, contented themselves with biting their lips, or *sacring* beneath their huge moustachios, the national volunteers waved aloft their arms, murmuring loudly and exclaiming that if the order to advance were any longer delayed, they would break their ranks and proceed as skirmishers to meet the enemy.

At this moment the drums were heard beating to arms, and at the same instant an aide-de-camp galloped up, and without even entering the square, raised aloft his plumed shakoe to attract their attention, and shouted out in a loud voice from the street, "To the lines, the enemy is approaching!"—and then returned as quickly as he had come.

Forthwith the drums of the troops of the line beat to arms, and the soldiers, falling into their ranks with the alertness and precision of habit, filed out of the square in double-quick time.

However great the rivalry which existed between the volunteers and the troops of the line, the former were not able with all their efforts to emulate in this movement the more practised skill of their military brethren. Some moments were lost before the ranks could be formed; then when this had been accomplished, some started with the right foot, and others with the left, causing a momentary confusion which obliged them to halt.

During this time, the tall individual with the inlaid carbine, seeing a vacant place in the middle of the third rank of volunteers, embraced the younger of his two children, and placing him in the arms of the negro with the blue waistcoat, ran with his elder son modestly to

take the place which the false manœuvre executed by the volunteers had left vacant.

But at the approach of these two *parias*, their right and left-hand neighbours instinctively drew back, impressing the same movement on those next them, so that the tall man and his son found themselves the centre of an ever-increasing circle, which kept widening in a manner precisely similar to the circles caused in a pool of water by a stone having been thrown into it.

The fat man with the field-officer's epaulettes, who had at length succeeded, with infinite difficulty, in establishing some sort of order in the first rank, now perceived the disorder which prevailed in the third; he raised himself upon his toes, and addressing those who were executing the singular manœuvre we have just described, he cried,—

“To your ranks, gentlemen! to your ranks!”

But to this double recommendation, uttered, moreover, in a tone which admitted of no reply, one unanymous cry responded,—

“No mulattoes with us! no mulattoes here!”—a cry which was repeated like an echo by the entire battalion.

The officer then comprehended the cause of the tumult, and beheld, in the middle of a large circle, the mulatto, who stood leaning on his carabine, whilst his elder son, red with anger, had already stepped back two or three paces in order to separate himself from those who repelled him.

At this sight, the field-officer pushed his way through the two foremost ranks, which opened to afford him a passage, and marched straight up to the insolent individual, who had dared, although a man of colour, to intrude among white soldiers.

Having reached the place occupied by the mulatto, he measured him from head to foot with eyes sparkling with indignation, and as the mulatto still remained before him upright and immovable as a post,—

“Well, M. Pierre Munier,” said he, “have you not heard, or must I repeat a second time to you, that

this is not your place, and that we do not desire your presence here."

By merely letting fall his large and heavy hand upon the little fat man who thus addressed him, Pierre Munier could have crushed him to the earth at a single blow; but in place of doing so, he made no reply, raised his head with a nervous and bewildered air, and meeting the eyes of his interlocutor, averted his own in an embarrassed manner,—a circumstance which but augmented the exasperation of the fat man by inflating his pride to a still higher degree.

"Come! what are you doing here?" said he, repulsing the mulatto with the flat of his hand.

"M. de Malmédie," replied Pierre Munier, "I had hoped, that, on a day like this, all distinctions of colour would have been effaced before the general danger."

"You had hoped!" said the fat man, shrugging his shoulders with a sneering laugh, "you had hoped! and pray what reason had you to hope, may I ask?"

"The desire I feel to perish, if necessary, in the defence of our island."

"Our island!" murmured the field-officer,—"our island! because these people have plantations like us, they fancy the island is their own."

"The island is no more ours than yours, gentlemen whites; I know that very well," replied Munier, timidly, "but if we allow such things to detain us at such a moment, the island will be soon neither yours nor ours."

"Enough!" said the field-officer, stamping his foot violently on the ground, in order, at the same time, by voice and gesture, to impose silence on the reasoner,—
"enough; is your name inscribed on the muster-roll of the National Guards?"

"No, monsieur; you well know that it is not," replied Munier; "for, when I presented myself before you for that purpose, you refused me."

"Well, then, what do you want?"

"I desire permission to follow you as a volunteer."

"Impossible!" said the fat man.

"And why impossible? Ah! if you would but consent, M. de Malmédie."

"Impossible, I tell you," repeated the field-officer, drawing himself up to the full height of his little figure. "These gentlemen who are under my orders, will not have any mulattoes among them."

"No; no mulattoes! no mulattoes!" exclaimed all the National Guards, with one voice.

"But in that case I shall not be able to fight, monsieur?" said Pierre Munier, letting his arms fall with an air of discouragement, and with difficulty restraining the big tears which trembled on his eyelids.

"Form a corps of men of colour, and put yourself at their head, or join that detachment of blacks which is about to follow us."

"But——" murmured Pierre Munier.

"I command you to quit the battalion;—I command you—do you hear?" repeated M. de Malmédie, raising his voice in an angry tone.

"Come, father, come, and leave these people, who would insult you," said a little voice, trembling with anger; "come!"

And Pierre Munier felt himself drawn back with so much force that he recoiled a few paces.

"Yes, Jacques, yes, I am coming," said he.

"It is not Jacques, father, 'tis I—George."

Munier turned round in astonishment: it was indeed the child, who, having scrambled down from the arms of the negro, had come to give his father this lesson.

Pierre Munier let his head fall upon his chest, and heaved a deep sigh.

During this time, the ranks of the National Guards had been re-established, M. de Malmédie resumed his post at the head of the first file, and the legion departed at a rapid pace.

Pierre Munier remained alone between his two chil-

dren, one of whom was red as fire, the other pale as death.

He cast a hurried glance upon the countenances of his boys, as if these blushes and this pallor were for him a double reproach——

“What would you have?” said he; “my poor children, you see how it is.”

Jacques was careless, and, moreover, a bit of a philosopher. The first sensations experienced by him had been doubtless painful; but reflection had quickly come to his assistance, and had amply consoled him for his previous defeat.

“Pooh!” replied he to his father, snapping his fingers as he spoke, “what is it to us after all, whether this little fat gentleman despises us or not? Are we not richer than he, father?—and are you not stronger than he? and as for me,” added he, casting a glance towards the child with the frilled collar, “let me catch his brat Henry near my sweetheart, and I will give him a trouncing he’ll remember for some time.”

“My good Jacques!” said Pierre Munier, thanking his elder son for having, by his careless indifference, in some measure alleviated his shame; he then turned towards his younger son to see if the latter would take the matter as philosophically as his elder brother had done.

But George remained impassible; all that his father could surprise upon his icy physiognomy was an almost imperceptible smile which slightly contracted his lips; yet, slight as it was, this smile had on it such an expression of disdain and pity, that, in the same way that one sometimes replies to words which have not been uttered, Pierre Munier replied to this smile.

“But, for heaven’s sake, what then would you have me do?”

And he awaited the child’s reply, tormented by that vague uneasiness we are unwilling to avow to ourselves and which nevertheless agitates us, when we

expect from an inferior, what we dread in spite of ourselves—the true appreciation of a circumstance just taken place.

George replied not a word, but turning his head towards the further end of the square.

“Father,” said he, “look at those mulattoes yonder, who are in want of a leader.”

“You are right, George,” cried Jacques, joyfully; already amply consoled for his previous humiliation by the consciousness of his strength, and, doubtless, reasoning with Cæsar: “Better to command these than serve those.”

And Pierre Munier, yielding to the counsel given by the younger of his sons, and to the impulse derived from the other, advanced towards the mulattoes, who, engaged in discussing what leader they should choose, no sooner perceived the individual, whom every man of colour in the island respected as a father, approach, than they gathered round him as around their natural head, and with one accord begged him to lead them to battle.

Then a strange change took place in this man; that feeling of inferiority, which he could not overcome in presence of the whites, gave place to a just appreciation of his own merit: his tall, though hitherto stooping figure, was now drawn up to its full height; his eyes, which before M. Malmédie he had kept humbly lowered towards the earth, or vacantly wandering, now flashed with energy. His voice, a moment before low and trembling, now assumed an accent of manly firmness; and it was with a gesture full of noble energy, that, casting behind his back his carabine, secured as it was to his shoulder by its sling, he drew his sabre, and, stretching forth his nervous and muscular arm towards the enemy, shouted aloud in his turn,—

“Forward!”

Then casting a farewell glance towards the younger of his children, who had now returned again to the negro in the blue vest, and who transported with joy and pride

clapped his little hands together, he disappeared with his black escort round the corner of the same street by which the troops of the line and the national guards had previously taken their departure, crying aloud, for the last time, to the negro in the blue vest, "Telemachus, watch over my son."

The line of the defences was divided into three parts. On the left was the bastion of the Fanfaron erected on the sea-shore, and mounting eighteen guns; in the centre, the lines, properly so called, crowned by twenty-four pieces of artillery, and on the right, the Battery Dumas, protected only by six guns.

The conquering enemy, after having at first advanced in three columns upon these three different points, abandoned the two first whose strength they had soon recognized, in order to concentrate their entire force upon the third, which was, as we have said, not only the weakest point in the line, but was, besides, defended only by the national artillery. Contrary to all expectation, however, these warlike youths, far from being intimidated at the sight of the compact mass advancing upon them with the terrible regularity of British discipline, ran to their posts, and manœuvring with the skilfulness and alacrity of old soldiers, kept up such a well-sustained and well-directed fire, that the enemy's troops fancied at length that they must have been deceived as to the strength of the battery, and the men who served it: nevertheless they still advanced, for the more murderous this battery was, the more urgent was the necessity of silencing its fire. But then La Maudito became really angry, and like a juggler who makes his audience forget an almost incredible piece of legerdemain by one still more wonderful, it redoubled its volleys, driving forth shot after shot, and grape after grape, with such vigour and rapidity that symptoms of disorder began at length to be manifested in the enemy's ranks. At the same time, (the British having now arrived within musket-shot,) a fire of small arms began to breeze up in its turn, and with such effect, that see-

their ranks thinning rapidly under this vigorous fire of musketry, while whole files were being swept away by the grape and round shot which were poured forth with murderous precision, the enemy, astonished at this resistance, as energetic as it was unexpected, gave way, and began to retire in some confusion.

On the orders of the Captain-general, the troops of the line and the national battalion, whose forces were united upon the threatened point, now sallied forth, one from the left and the other from the right, and with fixed bayonets charged the enemy's flank, whilst the formidable battery continued to thunder over the heads of the combatants. The troops of the line executed this manœuvre with their accustomed precision, and falling upon the British, cut a lane through their ranks and redoubled their confusion. But, whether carried away by excess of valour, or whether the necessary manœuvre was unskilfully executed, the national battalion commanded by M. de Malmédie, in place of falling on the left flank, and thus operating in concert with the troops of the line, made a false move, and attacked the enemy in front. On this circumstance occurring, the battery was obliged to cease firing, and as it was this fire above all which had intimidated the enemy, the latter finding themselves opposed to a body of men far inferior in point of numbers to themselves, took courage, and turned upon the nationals, who, to their honour it must be said, sustained the shock without recoiling a single step. Beset, however, by an enemy both better disciplined than themselves, and ten times their superior in point of numbers, this resistance could not last long on their side; while the battery which they had themselves silenced, being no longer able to afford them any assistance, they lost every moment so many men that they were in turn obliged to give way. Immediately, by a skilful movement, the British deployed on the right of the national battalion, which, on the point of being surrounded, and too inexperienced to oppose a square to the enemy, were from that moment regarded as

lost. In fact, the English continued their forward movement, and like a rising tide, were about to envelop with their waves this little island of men, when all at once shouts of "France! France!" were heard in the enemy's rear. A tremendous discharge of musquetry succeeded, which was followed by a silence more sombre and more terrible than even the previous uproar.

A strange undulation was now perceptible in the rearmost lines of the enemy, the impulse of which was felt even to the front ranks, and the red coats, under a vigorous charge of bayonets, gave way like ripe corn under the sickle of the husbandman; it was now their turn to be surrounded; it was now their turn to have to show a front at once to the left, the right, and the centre. But this newly arrived enemy gave them no repose; it pushed steadily on, so that, at the expiration of ten minutes, it had succeeded in cutting a lane through the enemy's ranks, reaching the unlucky battalion and freeing it from its perilous position: then, having seen the end which it had proposed thus happily accomplished, the reinforcement deployed upon itself, and wheeling round with its left flank as a pivot, and thus describing a circle, fell with fixed bayonets on the enemy's flank. M. de Malmedie, on his side, instinctively following the same manœuvre, had given a similar impulse to his battalion, so that the battery, now seeing itself unmasked, lost no time, and flaming up anew, came to second the efforts of this triple attack by vomiting forth upon the enemy showers of grape and canister. From that moment the victory was decided in favour of the French.

M. de Malmédie then feeling himself out of danger, cast a glance upon his liberators whom he had already caught a glimpse of, but whom he had hesitated to recognise, so painful to his feelings was the idea of owing his safety to such men. It was in fact this black corps, so much despised by him, which had followed him in his march, and which had so opportunely rejoined him

in the battle, and at the head of this corps was Pierre Munier, who, seeing that the British, when surrounding M. de Malmédie, had left their rear exposed, had hastened, with his three hundred men, to take advantage of this oversight, and attack the enemy in the flank. It was Pierre Munier who, having planned this manœuvre with the skill of a general, had executed it with the courage of a soldier, and who now, having no longer anything but death to fear, fought in front of all, his lofty figure drawn up to the full height of its commanding proportions, his eyes flashing, his nostrils expanded, his brow uncovered, his hair floating loosely in the wind,—enthusiastic—daring—sublime! It was Pierre Munier, whose voice, raised from time to time in the mêlée, was heard above every sound, shouting aloud to his men the word of command: “Forward!” Then, as following their noble leader, the brave party rushed furiously on, as the disorder became every instant more perceptible in the enemy’s ranks, the cry of, “To the colours, to the colours, comrades!” was heard. They beheld him dart into the midst of a group of English—fall—rise again—bury himself in their ranks, and in a few moments afterwards reappear, his uniform torn, his brow bleeding, but the British colours in his hand.

At this moment, the general, fearing lest the conquerors should allow themselves to be carried away too far in the pursuit of the enemy, and should fall into some snare, gave orders to sound the retreat. The troops of the line were the first to obey the command, leading with them the prisoners; then came the national guards, bearing the bodies of the slain, and, finally, the black volunteers brought up the rear, commanded by Pierre Munier, and surrounding their nobly won flag.

At the news of this victory, the entire population of the city rushed in crowds to the port to behold and welcome the victors, for in their ignorance the inhabitants of Port Louis imagined that the entire of the British forces had been engaged, and they were now in hopes that the English, so vigorously repulsed, would

return no more to the charge; accordingly, as each corps passed, they uttered fresh *vivats*; every one was happy, every one was proud, every one was victorious; they no longer were able to contain themselves. An unexpected happiness filled every heart, the unhopèd-for victory turned every head; the inhabitants had indeed expected resistance, but not success; consequently, when they beheld the victory declared so completely in their favour, men, women, children, the aged and the young, swore aloud with one voice, and with one exclamation, to labour at the entrenchments, and to die, if necessary, in their defence. Excellent promises, doubtless, and which each one made with the full intention of abiding by them, but which would have been but of little value on the arrival of another regiment, supposing, indeed, that another regiment should arrive.

But amid this general ovation no object had attracted such general attention as the English flag, and its gallant captor. Round Pierre Munier and his trophy, endless exclamations and ejaculations of astonishment were heard, to which the negroes responded by rhodomontades, whilst their leader, already fallen back again into the humble mulatto we have already described, answered with timid politeness the various questions which were addressed to him by each. Standing near the conqueror, his arm leaning on the barrel of his double-barrelled fowling-piece, the bayonet of which was stained with blood, Jacques proudly erected his good-humoured countenance, whilst George, who had escaped from the guardianship of Telemachus, and had rejoined his father on the port, convulsively grasped his parent's powerful hand, essaying in vain to restrain the tears of joy which fell from his eyes, in spite of all his efforts to contain them.

At a few paces distant from Pierre Munier, stood M. de Malmédie, no longer the curled, frilled, pomatumed individual he had been on his departure, but with his cravat torn, his waistcoat in fragments, and covered with dust and sweat. He also was surrounded and felicitated

by his family, but the felicitations that he received were those which are addressed to a man that has just escaped a danger, and not the plaudits that are bestowed upon a conqueror. Consequently, in the midst of these tender inquietudes he appeared considerably embarrassed, and to dissemble this feeling, he demanded loudly what had become of his son Henri and his negro Bijou, when all at once he saw them appear, forcing their way through the crowd, Henri running to cast himself into his father's arms, and Bijou to congratulate his master.

At this moment, a person came up to inform Pierre Munier, that a negro who had fought under him, and who had received a mortal wound, having been carried into a house on the port, and feeling himself on the point of death, requested to see him. Pierre Munier looked around, seeking Jacques in order to confide the flag to his care, but Jacques had met with his friend the Malgache dog, who had come in his turn to pay his compliments as well as the others; he had then placed his fowling-piece on the ground, and the child resuming the ascendancy over the man, he was busily engaged at about fifty paces off, in a game of romps with his four-footed companion. George then perceived his father's embarrassment, and stretching out his hand:—

"Give it to me, father," he said, "I will keep it for you."

Pierre Munier smiled, and as he did not imagine that any one would dare to touch the glorious trophy to which he alone had any right, he affectionately embraced his child, and intrusting to him the standard, which the little fellow held with difficulty in an erect position, pressing it with both hands against his chest, he proceeded hastily towards the house where the death agony of one of his brave volunteers demanded his presence.

George remained alone, but the child instinctively felt that though alone he was not unprotected; his father's glory watched over him, and his eye radiant with pride, he looked around on the population which encircled him; all at once, this happy and brilliant

glance encountered that of the child with the frilled collar, and became disdainful. The latter, on his side, contemplated George with envy, doubtlessly asking himself, how it was that his father also had not taken a flag? This mental interrogation, in all probability, led him naturally to the conclusion, that for want of a flag of his own, he could not do better than take possession of that of another. For, advancing cavalierly to the spot where George was standing, who, although he divined his hostile intentions, did not move a muscle—

“Give me that,” said he.

“What do you mean by *that*?” demanded George.

“The flag,” replied Henri.

“The flag is not yours. This flag is my father’s.”

“What’s that to me? I want it.”

“You shan’t have it.”

The child with the embroidered collar then stretched out his hand to seize the flag-pole, a demonstration to which George only replied by compressing his lips, turning paler than usual, and taking a step backwards; but this retreating movement but encouraged his opponent, who, like all spoiled children, imagined that he had but to desire in order to possess. He strode forward a couple of paces, and this time, so cleverly had he taken his measures, that he succeeded in grasping the pole, exclaiming with all the strength of his little angry voice,

“I tell you I want that.”

“And I tell you that you shall not have it,” repeated George, repulsing him with one hand, whilst with the other he continued to press the conquered standard against his breast.

“Ah, vile mulatto! do you dare to touch me?” cried Henri. “Well, you shall see.”

And quickly drawing his little sabre from its scabbard, before George had time to put himself on his defence, he gave him a cut upon the forehead with all his force. The blood spurted forth from the wound, and trickled down the face of the child.

“Coward!” said George, coldly.

Exasperated by this insult, Henri was about to redouble his violence, when Jacques, springing at one bound to his brother's side, sent the aggressor rolling to the earth at a distance of ten paces, by a vigorous blow applied in the middle of the face, and springing upon the sabre which the latter had let drop from his hand in his fall, he broke it into three or four pieces, then spit upon the fragments, and cast them towards his discomfited foe.

It was now the turn of the child with the embroidered collar to feel the blood inundate his features, but his blood had flowed from a blow of the hand, and not from a sabre cut.

This entire scene had passed so rapidly, that neither M de Malmédie who, as we have before said, was occupied at a short distance off in receiving the congratulations of his family, nor Pierre Munier, who had just left the house where the negro had expired, could arrive in time to prevent it; they assisted only at the catastrophe, both running up to the spot at the same moment. Pierre Munier, breathless, oppressed, trembling, M. de Malmédie crimson with rage, and choking with pride. Both parents met opposite to where George was standing.

"Monsieur," cried M. de Malmédie, in an almost inarticulate voice, "Monsieur, did you see what has occurred?"

"Alas! yes, M. de Malmédie," replied Pierre Munier, "and believe me, that if I had been here this circumstance would not have taken place."

"But in the mean time, monsieur, in the mean time," cried M. de Malmédie, "your son has laid his hands upon mine. The son of a mulatto has had the audacity to raise his hand against the child of a white man."

"I am truly sorry for what has passed, M. de Malmédie," stammered the poor father, "and I humbly implore your pardon for the offence."

"You humbly implore pardon indeed, sir!" replied the haughty colonist, drawing himself up every instant

more and more, in proportion as Munier became more humble and submissive. "You humbly implore pardon, indeed! And do you imagine that that will be sufficient?"

"What can I do more, monsieur?"

"What can you do, what can you do," repeated M. de Malmédie, himself embarrassed in the choice of the satisfaction he desired to obtain; "you can have the wretch flogged who has dared to strike my Henri."

"Have me flogged, eh!" said Jacques, picking up his double-barrelled fowling-piece, and from a child becoming once more a man; "well, come and try to flog me, M. de Malmédie, that's all!"

"Hush, Jacques; hush, my child," cried Pierre Munier.

"Pardon, father!" said Jacques, "but I am in the right, and I will not be silent. M. Henri came up to my brother, who was doing nothing to him, and gave him a sabre cut, and then I struck M. Henri; M. Henri, therefore, it is that is in the wrong, and not I."

"Gave my son a sabre cut! struck my George, my dear child!" cried Pierre Munier, darting towards his son. "Is it true that you are wounded?"

"It's nothing, father," said George.

"How nothing?" cried Pierre Munier, "why, your forehead is cut open. Sir," resumed he, turning towards M. de Malmédie, "only look here, Jacques spoke the truth; your son has almost killed my child."

As it was impossible for M. de Malmédie to resist the evidence of his own senses, he turned round to his son.

"Come, Henri," said the field-officer; "how did this thing happen?"

"Papa," said Henri, "it was not my fault; I wanted to get that flag to take it to you, and this villain would not give it to me."

"And why would you not give my son this flag, little rascal?" demanded M. de Malmédie.

„Because the flag is neither your son's nor yours, nor nobody's else; because this flag belongs to my father."

"And after that, what happened?" demanded M. de Malmédie, continuing to interrogate his son.

"After that, seeing that he would not give it to me, I tried to take it. It was then that that great brute came up and gave me a blow in the face."

"So that was how the thing passed?"

"Yes, papa."

"He is a liar!" said Jacques; "I did not touch him until I saw my brother's blood; had it not been for that, I should not have struck him at all."

"Silence, good-for-nothing!" cried M. de Malmédie. Then advancing towards George: "Give me this flag," said he.

But George, instead of obeying this order, again retreated, pressing the standard with all his might against his breast.

"Give me this flag, I say," repeated M. de Malmédie, in a tone of menace, which plainly indicated that should his demands not be quickly complied with, he would proceed to the utmost extremities.

"But, sir," murmured Pierre Munier, "'twas I who took the flag from the British."

"I know that very well, sir; but it shall never be said that a mulatto had the audacity to contend with impunity against a man like me. Give me this flag!"

"But, sir——"

"I desire it—I command you; obey your officer."

Pierre Munier, indeed, felt half inclined to reply:—"You are not my officer, since you refused to have me for a soldier"—but the words expired upon his lips; his habitual humility resumed the ascendancy over his courage. He sighed; and although this obedience to an order so unjust, made his heart swell with indignation, he himself took the flag from the hands of his son George, who now ceased to offer any resistance, and handed it into those of the field-officer, who retired, carrying off the stolen trophy.

It was, indeed, a strange, melancholy, and almost incredible sight, to behold a specimen of human nature, so

rich, so vigorous, so full of noble characteristics, cede thus unresistingly to this other nature, so vulgar, so mean, so paltry, so common, and so poor. Yet so it was; and what is most extraordinary is, that this action astonished no one, for under circumstances, not similar, but equivalent, the same thing occurs every day in the colonies; habituated from his infancy to respect the whites as men of a superior race, Pierre Munier had all his life permitted himself to be crushed beneath this aristocracy of colour, before which he had again, in this instance, given way, without even dreaming of offering any resistance. He was one of those heroes who will bare their breasts before a discharge of grape-shot, but bend the knee before a prejudice. The lion will attack man, that terrestrial image of God, but will, it is said, flee in terror at the crowing of a cock.

George who, when seeing his own blood flow, had not let a single tear escape him, burst into tears and sobbed aloud, when he found himself standing empty-handed before his father, who gazed at him sadly, without even endeavouring to console him. As to Jacques, he could with difficulty restrain his passion, and swore that he would be revenged some day or other upon Henri, M. de Malmédie, and every white man in the colony.

Ten minutes had scarcely elapsed after the scene we have just described, when a messenger hastily galloping into the town, announced that the British were descending by the William plains and the little river, ten thousand strong; then almost immediately afterwards, the watch tower on the summit of Mount Discovery signalled the arrival of a fresh British squadron, which, casting anchor in Black-river Bay, had landed five thousand men on the coast. Lastly, they learned at the same time that the division which they had that morning repulsed, had rallied on the banks of the Lata-niers river, and was prepared to march a second time on Port Louis, combining its movements with the two other invading forces, which were in full advance—the one by the creek of Courtoise, and the other by Le

Reduit. To offer resistance to such an overwhelming force, was out of the question; accordingly, to the few rash voices who, recollecting their vow made in the morning to conquer or die, demanded to be led to battle, the captain-general replied by disbanding the national guards and volunteers, and declaring, that, possessed of full powers from His Majesty the Emperor Napoleon, he was prepared to treat with the British for the surrender of the city.

Considering that a force of twenty-five thousand men surrounded a body of scarcely four thousand, it would have been an act of madness to have opposed such a measure; accordingly, upon the strict injunctions of the captain-general, each individual retired to his home, so that the city remained occupied only by the troops of the line.

At five o'clock, on the morning of the 3d of December, the capitulation was drawn up and signed, and the mutual exchanges and ratifications took place; the same day the enemy occupied the lines, and the following morning the British flag floated over the city and harbour.

Eight days after these events, the captive French squadron stood out of the port in full sail, taking with it the entire garrison, like a poor family chased from the paternal roof. So long as the waving of the last flag could be perceived from the shore, the inhabitants remained in a crowd upon the quay; but when the last frigate had sunk below the horizon, each retired homewards silently and in sorrow. Two men alone of this crowd were left standing upon the quay: these were the mulatto Pierre Munier and his negro slave Telemachus.

"Massa Munier," said the latter, addressing his master, "let us climb the mountain yonder, and we shall still be able to see from thence little Massas Jacques and George."

"Yes, you are right, my good Telemachus," cried Pierre Munier, "and if we are unable to distinguish the

dear children themselves, we shall at least see the ship that contains them."

And Pierre Munier, setting off with the rapidity of a youth, in an instant climbed Mount Discovery, from the summit of which he could, until night at least, follow with his eyes, not his children—the distance, as he had foreseen, being much too great—but the frigate the *Bellona*, on board of which they had embarked.

Pierre Munier had in fact determined, how great soever the sacrifice might be, to part with his children and send them to France, under the protection of General Decaen. Jacques and George therefore departed for Paris, having letters of introduction to two or three of the principal mercantile men of the capital, with whom Pierre Munier had for a length of time been intimately connected by commerce. The pretext for their departure was the completion of their education. The real cause of their absence was the open and avowed hatred which M. de Malmédie had vowed against both, ever since the occurrence of the flag; a hatred at which their poor father, with his well-known character, trembled to think of, fearing lest one day or other they should fall victims to its effects.

As to Henri, his mother was too fond of him to part with him thus. Besides, what more did he require to know, beyond the fact that every man of colour was born to respect and obey him?

A circumstance which, as we have seen, the young gentleman was already perfectly conversant with.

CHAPTER IV.

FOURTEEN YEARS AFTERWARDS.

THE day on which a European ship is signalled off the island, as about to enter the port, is a holiday in the Isle of France; the reason is, that, so long severed from the maternal presence, the greater portion of the inhabitants of the colony await impatiently some news of the people, the families, the relations, or friends they may possess beyond the sea; each hopes for some tidings, and stands gazing from afar, his eyes fixed on the maritime messenger, which brings him perhaps a letter from a friend, perhaps the portrait of a lady love, or better still, perhaps, the fair one in person or the friend himself.

For this ship, the object of so many desires, the source of so many hopes and expectations, is the ephemeral chain which unites Europe and Africa, the flying bridge cast from one world to the other; consequently no news is spread with greater rapidity through the island, than that which issues from the signal station on Mount Discovery, when the sentinel cries,—

“A ship in sight, making for the island!”

We say from the signal station on Mount Discovery, because the ship, almost always, forced to seek an easterly wind, passes Grand-Port, coasts the land for the distance of two or three leagues, doubles the point of the Four Cocoas, passing between Flat Island and the mainland, and, some hours afterwards, having effected this passage, appears off Port Louis, the inhabitants of which having been informed of its coming overnight by means of the signals which have crossed the island to announce its approach, await its arrival, collected in a crowd upon the quay and shore.

After what we have said of the avidity with which every one in the Isle of France awaits news from Europe, the reader will doubtless not be astonished at

the concourse of persons which, about eleven o'clock on the morning of a beautiful day towards the close of February 1824, pressed towards all points from whence they could see enter the harbour of Port Louis, the Leicester, a beautiful 36 gun frigate, signalled as being off the land at two o'clock the preceding afternoon.

We ask the reader's permission to introduce him to, or rather to make him renew his acquaintance with, two personages whom we shall find on board.

The one was a man rather above the middle height, with light hair, fair complexion, and blue eyes, and a cast of features at once regular in their form and calm in their expression; no one would have supposed him to have numbered more than thirty, or at most five-and-thirty years, although he was in reality more than forty. A casual observer, at the first glance, would have remarked nothing peculiarly striking in his appearance; though, on the other hand, he would have been compelled to admit that nothing was wanting. But if, after the first glance, a spectator had any motive for continuing the examination of his person, he might have remarked that the object of his curiosity possessed small and beautifully formed hands and feet, which are in all countries, but particularly in Great Britain, signs of *blood* and race. His voice was clear and firm, but without any marked intonation, and wanting in modulation. His clear, pale blue eyes, which, in ordinary circumstances, might be reproached with want of expression, wandered over every object, without seeming to dwell upon any, or to wish to penetrate beneath the surface. From time to time, however, he contracted his eyes like a man fatigued with the glare of the sun, accompanying this movement with a slight separation of the lips, which then disclosed to view a double row of small teeth, beautifully even and regular, and as white as pearls. This species of nervous affection seemed, on these occasions, utterly to deprive his countenance of the small portion of expression it had originally possessed, but a careful examination would have satisfied an observer that, far from being wanting in intelligence,

it was during these moments that the eyes, darting a rapid and searching glance of flame between their closely-drawn lids, sought the secret thoughts of the interlocutor even in the inmost depths of his heart.

Those who saw him for the first time, never failed to take him for a man possessing little capacity or intelligence; he well knew that this was the opinion which superficial persons in general entertained of him, and almost always, whether through calculation or indifference, he was pleased to leave them unenlightened, very sure of being able to undeceive them when the fancy should seize him, or when the fitting moment should arrive. For, under this deceitful envelope, lay hidden a singularly profound and searching mind, just, as it often happens, that two or three inches of snow will hide a precipice of a thousand feet in depth; accordingly, with the consciousness of this almost universal superiority, he waited patiently until an opportunity for triumphing should arrive; then, as soon as he encountered an opinion opposed to his own, and found in the person who expressed this opinion an opponent worthy of him, he would suddenly join in the conversation—which he had, until then, allowed to wander in all its capricious turnings and windings—would become animated by degrees, his ample chest would expand, his noble form gradually erect itself to its full height; for his powerful voice, and sparkling eyes nobly seconded his keen, trenchant, and sparkling eloquence, at once seductive and serious, dazzling and profound. If this occasion came not, he would remain passive, content to be regarded by those who surrounded him, as an ordinary man. Not that he was in any degree wanting in self-love; on the contrary, he pushed his pride on some subjects to excess; but it was a system of conduct which he had imposed upon himself, and from which he never varied. Every time that a false proposition, an erroneous opinion, an ill-sustained vanity, or, in short, any absurd or ridiculous idea, was given utterance to before him, his keen and brilliant wit would summon to his tongue a biting rejoinder, or upon his lips a sarcastic smile. But he in-

stantly checked this impulse; and when he could not suppress entirely his emotion of disdain, he disguised it under one of those nervous contractions of the eye which were habitual to him, well knowing, that the best means of hearing and seeing all, was to appear deaf and blind. Perhaps, like Sixtus Quintus, he would even have liked to appear paralytic; but as that would have entailed upon him too long and too fatiguing a course of dissimulation, he had renounced the idea.

The other individual was a dark young man, with pale complexion and long black hair; his eyes, which were large, admirably formed, and of the most liquid softness, had, lurking behind this expression which they owed only to the constant preoccupation of thought, a character of firmness which struck the spectator at the first glance. Did he for a moment lose his temper, which was rare (for his entire organization appeared to obey, not its physical instincts, but a superior moral power), then his eyes became lighted up with an inward flame, and darted forth lightning flashes, whose sources seemed to lie hidden in the depths of his soul. Although the lines of his countenance were pure, they failed to a certain degree in regularity; his broad and lofty forehead, in beautiful harmony with the rest of his features, was marked by a slight scar, almost imperceptible when in his habitual state of calmness and repose, but which betrayed itself by a white line whenever the blood mounted to his face. A small jet-black moustache shaded his lip, and disguised the proportions of a mouth, a little too large perhaps but garnished with large and snow-white teeth. The general expression of his countenance was grave and serious; and by the premature wrinkles in his brow, the almost perpetual contraction of his eyebrows, and the severe character of every feature, one could recognise a man of profound reflection and unshaken resolution. The reverse of his companion, whose features were unmarked, and who, though in reality forty years of age, appeared but thirty, or at most five-and-thirty, he, though no more than five-and-twenty, appeared almost thirty. As to the rest

of his person, he was about the middle height, but beautifully proportioned; each separate limb was perhaps too slightly formed, but one felt convinced that when animated by any sudden emotion, whatsoever it might be, a violent nervous tension would lend them ample force. It might easily be seen that nature, in exchange, had given him agility and address, much more than it had denied him in mere animal power. For the rest, dressed almost always with elegant simplicity, he now wore a close-fitting riding-frock and trousers, whose fashion and cut plainly indicated that they had issued from the hands of one of the most skilful tailors of Paris; at his button-hole hung, knotted with graceful negligence, the united ribbons of the orders of the Legion of Honour and of Charles III.

These two men had met on board the Leicester, which had taken the one on board at Portsmouth, and the other at Cadiz. At the first glance they had mutually recognised each other, as having previously met in the *salons* of London and Paris, where one sees all the world; they had then bowed like old acquaintances, but at first without speaking, for never having been introduced, both had been restrained by that aristocratic reserve, which causes well-bred men to hesitate, even under particular circumstances, from crossing the bounds prescribed by the rules of strict etiquette. The sameness however of life at sea, the contracted circle in which they each day moved, and the natural attraction which two men of the world mutually experience for each other's society, had soon drawn them together. They had at first exchanged a few commonplace remarks, then their conversation had assumed by degrees a little more consistency, and at the end of a few days, each had recognised his companion to be a superior man, and had felicitated himself in having accidentally met with so agreeable a companion for a voyage of more than three months' duration. In short, they had, until something better should turn up, united themselves by the ties of that every day friendship, which, without having its roots deeply fixed in the past, becomes an amusement

for the present moment, without being an engagement for the future. Then, during those long evenings in the latitude of the equator, during the beautiful nights of the tropics, they had had time mutually to study one another, and had discovered, that in arts, science, or politics, each had studied deeply, and each found in his companion a master mind like his own. Both therefore had remained constantly fronting each other, like two wrestlers of equal strength; and during this long voyage only on one occasion had either of these men gained any apparent advantage over the other; this was, when during a sudden and heavy squall which struck the frigate shortly after doubling the Cape of Good Hope, and in which the captain of the Leicester, wounded by the fall of a spar, had been carried senseless into his cabin, the light-haired passenger had taken possession of the speaking-trumpet, and springing upon one of the quarter-deck guns, and, in the absence of the second in command, ordered in the instant a succession of manoeuvres, by the aid of which the frigate had triumphantly succeeded in weathering the gale; then, the squall having passed over, his countenance, an instant before resplendent with the sublime pride which mounts to the brow of every human creature when contending against the power of Nature, resumed its ordinary expression; his voice, the clear and piercing note of which had made itself heard above the pealing of the thunder and the whistling of the wind, descended to its ordinary diapason, and with a gesture as simple as his preceding actions had been exalted and poetic, he handed to the first lieutenant the speaking-trumpet, that naval sceptre which is, in the hands of him who bears it, the insignium of absolute command.

During all this time, his companion, upon whose calm features, let us listen to say, it would have been impossible to observe the slightest trace of emotion, had followed him with his eyes, with that expression of envy which a man feels who is obliged to recognise a superiority over himself, in one whose equal he had *fully imagined himself to be*. Then, when the danger

had passed, and they once more found themselves standing together on the quarter-deck, he contented himself with saying,—

“You have been a captain in the navy, then, my lord?”

“Yes,” simply replied the individual to whom this title had been given; “I had even the rank of commodore, but for the last six years I have been employed in a diplomatic capacity, and, in the moment of peril, I merely remembered my old trade.” The subject was not afterwards alluded to, but it could easily be seen that the younger of the two was inwardly humiliated by this superiority which his companion had, in so unexpected a manner, acquired over him, and of which he would most certainly have remained in ignorance, had it not been for the event which, in some sort, had forced it into light.

The question which we have mentioned, together with the reply which it had called forth, very plainly indicated that these two men had not made, during the three months which they had passed together, any inquiries relative to their respective social positions. They had recognised each other only as brothers in intelligence, and this had sufficed. They knew that the destination of both was the Isle of France, and they had sought to learn no more.

For the rest, both appeared equally impatient to arrive, for they had each given strict directions that the moment land was in sight, they should be informed. This direction was useless for one of them at least; for the young man with the black hair was upon the poop leaning negligently over the bulwarks, when the look-out at the masthead gave utterance to that cry which always acts so electrically, even upon sailors—

“Land, ho!”

At this cry, his companion appeared on deck ascending from the cabin, and advancing towards the young man with a step, which, in spite of himself, was more rapid than usual; he leaned over the side, near him.

"Well, my lord," said the latter, "so we have at last arrived; at least so I am informed, for I confess to my shame, that it is in vain I have searched the horizon; I can perceive nothing but a species of vapour, which might just as well be a mist floating over the sea, as an island, having its foundations at the bottom of the ocean."

"Yes, I can easily conceive your difficulty," replied the elder of the two men, "for it is the eye of a sailor alone which can distinguish with certainty, at such a distance, water from sky, and land from clouds; but I," added he, half closing his eyes, "I, child of the sea that I am, can distinguish our isle in all its outlines, and I might almost say, in all its details."

"Well, my lord," rejoined the young man, "that is an additional proof of the superiority which your lordship possesses over me; but I confess that, were it any other than yourself who assured me of such a fact, I should be almost inclined to reject it as an impossibility."

"Take this spy-glass, then," said the sailor, "whilst I with my naked eye describe the coast to you. If I succeed, will you then believe me?"

"My lord," replied his incredulous companion, "I know you to be a man in all things so much superior to other men, that, be assured, I would believe what you tell me without any additional proof on your part. If, therefore, I take the glass you offer me, believe me it is rather to satisfy the desire of my heart, than from any feelings of empty curiosity."

"Come, come," said his companion, with a laugh, "I can see that the atmosphere of the shore is taking effect already; you are becoming a flatterer."

"I a flatterer, my lord!" said the young man, shaking his head. "Oh! no, no; your lordship deceives yourself. Believe me, when I assure you that the Leicester would have to make more than one voyage from pole to pole, and accomplish, more than once, the circumnavigation of the world, before you would see such

a change take place in me. No, my lord, I do not flatter you, I but thank you for the many kind attentions you have shown me during this interminable voyage, and, I may almost venture to add, for the friendship that your lordship has testified to a poor stranger like myself."

"My dear companion," replied the Englishman, grasping the young man's hand, "I trust that for you, as well as for myself, there are in this world no strangers save the narrow-minded herd, the fools and charlatans of society, and that by the one, as well as the other, every superior man is welcomed as a brother, wherever we may meet him. So, this point settled, a truce to compliments, my young friend; take this telescope and follow my description, for we are advancing so rapidly, that there will soon be no merit in accomplishing the little geographical demonstration which I have taken upon me to execute."

The young man took the proffered glass and adjusted it to his eye.

"Can you see?" inquired the Englishman.

"Perfectly," replied the young man.

"Do you see Round Island, on our extreme right, shaped like a cone, and isolated in the middle of the sea?"

"Distinctly."

"Do you observe, rather nearer to us, Flat Island, close to which there is at this moment passing a brig, which, from the squareness of its yards, appears to me very like a man of war. This evening we shall be where she is now, and shall be passing the object which she is now passing."

The young man lowered the telescope, and endeavoured to discern with his naked eye the objects which his companion perceived so easily, but which he, even with the aid of the glass, could barely distinguish; then, with a smile of astonishment, he exclaimed, "It is miraculous!" and again placed the glass to his eye.

"Do you see the Coin de Mire," continued his com-

panion, "which, at this distance, is almost blended with Cape Misfortune, of such sad and poetic memory?—do you see the piton of the Bamboo, behind which rises the mountain of La Faiënce?—do you see the mountain of Grand Port?—and there, on the left, can you distinguish the hill of the Creoles?"

"Yes, yes, I see all these, and recognise all, for every peak and summit is familiar to my childhood; I have stored them up in my memory with religious care. But you," continued the young man, driving the three tubes of his spy-glass back one into the other with the palm of his hand, "it is not the first time that you have beheld this coast, and there is more of memory than of real vision in the description you have just given me."

"You are right," said the Englishman, with a smile, "and I see that there is no use in playing the charlatan with you. Yes, you are right, I have already seen this coast, and have in some respects spoken from memory, although the impressions which it has left me are probably less agreeable than those which it recalls to you; yes, I was here at a period, when, in all probability we were enemies, my dear companion; for I speak of fourteen years ago."

"That is precisely the period at which I quitted the Isle of France," replied the young man with the dark hair.

"Were you there at the time of the naval engagement which took place off Grand Port, and of which I ought not to speak, were it only out of national pride, so majestically were we beaten there?"

"Oh, on the contrary, speak of it, my lord, speak of it," interrupted the young man. "You, English, have so often since then taken your revenge, that it is almost a matter of pride in you to avow a defeat."

"Well, then, I was there during the period of which I speak, for I then served in the navy."

"As midshipman, doubtless?"

"As third-lieutenant, monsieur."

"Why, at that period, permit me to say, my lord, that you must have been but a child."

"How old do you think I am, monsieur?"

"Why, I should say we were very nearly about the same age—scarcely thirty."

"I am nearly forty, monsieur," replied the Englishman, with a smile. "Was I not right, just now, when I said that you were in the flattering vein?"

Astonished at this reply, the young man now examined his companion with more attention than he had hitherto done, and recognised, by the almost imperceptible wrinkles indicated rather than drawn round the corners of the mouth, and at the angles of either eye, that he might in reality be of the age he had stated, but which he was so far from appearing. Then abandoning this inspection, to return to the question which had originally been the cause of this digression—

"Yes," said he, "I recollect that engagement, and another one also, which took place at the opposite extremity of the island. Do you know Port Louis, my lord?"

"No, monsieur, I am acquainted only with this side of the island. I was dangerously wounded in the engagement of Grand Port, and sent home to Europe as a prisoner of war. Since then I have not revisited the Indian Seas, though I shall now, in all probability, make a considerable sojourn here."

Then, as if the last words which had been exchanged between our two fellow voyagers, had aroused in the bosom of each a train of deep and hidden sensations, they instinctively separated, and retired to meditate in silence, the one at the prow, the other at the stern.

It was upon the day following this conversation, that, after having doubled the Isle d'Ambre, and at the predicted hour passed beneath the Flat Island, the Leicester made, as we have related at the commencement of this chapter, her entry into the roads of Port Louis, in the midst of that concourse of persons which

invariably collects together to greet the arrival of every ship from Europe.

But, on this occasion, the crowd was even greater than usual; for the authorities of the colony expected the future governor of the island, who, as the frigate doubled the Ile des Tonneliers, ascended on deck in his full uniform of a general officer. Then, for the first time, was the young man with the black hair informed of the political grade of his *compagnon de voyage*, whose aristocratic title only he had been previously acquainted with.

In fact the light-haired Englishman was none other than Lord William Murray, who, after having been alternately sailor and ambassador, had at length been appointed by his Britannic Majesty Governor of the Mauritius.

The reader will probably recognise in him, the young lieutenant whom he has already beheld on board the Nereid, reclining at the feet of his uncle, Captain Wilmoughby, and wounded in the side with a grape shot. He may also remember that we mentioned he had recovered from his wounds, and that we announced his speedy reappearance as one of the principal personages of our tale.

At the moment of separating from his young companion, Lord William turned towards him:—

“By-the-bye, monsieur,” said he, “in three days I intend to give a grand dinner to the authorities of the island; may I hope that you will do me the honour of being one of my guests?”

“With the greatest pleasure, my lord,” replied the young man; “but yet, before I accept your invitation, it is necessary that, on my side, I should inform your excellency of my name.”

“You can have yourself announced as you enter, my dear sir,” replied Lord William Murray, “and I shall then learn your name; in the mean time, I know your worth, and that is all I require.”

Then smiling and waving his hand, to his former

companion, the new governor descended with the captain into the state barge, which, impelled towards the shore by the exertions of ten vigorous rowers, soon touched the land at the fountain of the *Chien-de-Plomb*.

At this moment, the guard of honour, which was drawn up on the beach, presented arms, the band struck up the national anthem, and the guns from the fort and the frigate fired a royal salute, which was returned like an echo by the shipping at anchor in the roads. Forthwith, universal acclamations of "Long live Lord Murray!" joyously greeted the new governor, who, after having gracefully acknowledged this brilliant reception, proceeded, surrounded by the principal authorities of the island, towards the Government House.

And yet those very persons who joyfully hailed the representative of royalty, and so uproariously greeted his arrival, were the same men who had formerly wept the departure of the French; but then, it must be recollected that fourteen years had elapsed since that epoch; the old generation had in great part disappeared, and the new generation only preserved the remembrance of past events through a feeling of pride, as one preserves an old family relic. Fourteen years, as we have seen, was more than sufficient to cause them to forget the death of their best friend; to violate a sworn oath; more than sufficient, in a word, to destroy, inter, and rebaptize a great man and a great nation.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

ALL eyes had followed Lord William Murray to the government-house, but, when the doors of the viceregal palace were closed upon him and his suite, they once more reverted to the frigate.

At this moment, the young man with black hair descended the side in his turn, and the curiosity which had abandoned the governor, now fixed itself upon him. In fact, the spectators had seen Lord William Murray address him familiarly, and cordially shake him by the hand; so that the assembled multitude, with its ordinary sagacity, had decided that this stranger was some young scion of the aristocracy of France or England. This surmise became absolute certainty at the sight of the double ribbon which ornamented his button-hole, of which ribbons, one, it must be avowed, was by no means so universally distributed as it is to-day. However, the inhabitants of Port Louis had ample time and leisure to examine the new arrival, for after having gazed around him for a few moments, as though he had expected to meet some of his friends or relations on the pier, he remained on the beach, waiting until the governor's horses had been landed; then, when this operation was terminated, a dark-complexioned domestic, clad in the costume of an African Moor, with whom the stranger exchanged some words in an unknown language, saddled his own two horses in the Arabian fashion, and taking both by the bridles—for their riders could not as yet trust themselves on their cramped and stiffened limbs—he followed his master who had already preceded him on foot towards the *chaussée*, gazing round him on all sides, as if he still expected to perceive some well known friendly countenance among the motley groups of persons which lined the road.

Among the little knots of individuals which were

gathered together to gaze at the new arrivals, at the spot characteristically enough denominated Idler's Point, there was one group in the centre of which was a stout man of about fifty or fifty-four years of age, with grey hair, ordinary features, and a loud voice, and whose countenance was ornamented by a pair of whiskers cut to a point, and joining on each side of a large sensual looking mouth. He was accompanied by a handsome young man of about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age. The fat man was clad in a riding-coat of brown merino stuff, nankeen pantaloons, and a white quilted waistcoat. He wore a cravat with embroidered ends, and a large shirt front, profusely ornamented with ruffles, floated over his breast. The young man, whose features, although a little more marked than those of his companion, yet possessed such a striking resemblance to them as to make it evident that these two individuals were bound by ties still nearer than those of mere acquaintanceship, wore a white hat, a silk handkerchief carelessly knotted round his neck, and had on a dark-coloured coat, and waistcoat and trousers of snow white duck.

"By my faith, there goes a handsome young fellow!" said the stout man, regarding the stranger, who was at that moment passing within a few paces of where he was standing, "and should he make a long sojourn in our island, I would recommend our young maidens to keep a sharp look-out upon their affections."

"There goes a devilish fine horse," said the young man, raising a glass to his eye; "pure Arabian blood every inch of him, if I am not deceived."

"Do you know the gentleman, Henri?" demanded the stout man.

"Not I, father; but if he wishes to sell his horse, I know a purchaser who will give him a thousand piastres for him."

"And that purchaser is Henri de Malmédie, is it not, my boy?" said the stout man; "and you would do right to gratify your fancy; you are able to afford to do so; you are rich."

The offer of M. Henri Malmédie, and the approbation with which it was greeted by his father, had doubtless reached the ear of the stranger; for his lip curled disdainfully, and he fixed in turns upon the father and son a haughty glance, which was not altogether free from a threatening expression; then, in all probability, better informed as to their names and condition than they were with respect to his, he proceeded on his way, murmuring to himself—

“Still the same! always the same!”

“What does this fellow mean, I wonder?” demanded M. de Malmédie of those who surrounded him.

“I can’t conceive, father,” replied Henri; “but the very first time we meet, if he looks at us in that manner again, I shall certainly ask him.”

“Pooh, Henri! what could you expect?” said M. de Malmédie, with an air of pity for the stranger’s ignorance, “the poor fellow evidently knows not who we are.”

“Well, then, I shall take care to inform him,” murmured Henri to himself.

During this time, the stranger, whose disdainful glance had aroused this menacing colloquy, without appearing in any wise uneasy at the impression produced by his passage, and without even deigning to turn round to observe its effect, had continued on his way to the ramparts. Having passed almost the third part of the Company’s gardens, his attention was attracted by a group, standing upon a little bridge which led from the garden to the court of a handsome-looking house, in the centre of which was a beautiful young creature of about fifteen or sixteen years of age, whom the stranger, doubtless a lover of art, and consequently an admirer of beauty wherever it was to be met with, paused for a moment to regard more at his ease. Although almost upon the threshold of her own house, the young girl, who doubtless belonged to one of the wealthiest families in the island, was accompanied by a European governess, who, by her long fair hair and transparent complexion, might be recognised as an

Englishwoman, whilst an old grey-headed negro, clad in waistcoat and pantaloons of white osnaburg, stood at a little distance, his eyes fixed upon his mistress, and his foot as it were almost raised in readiness to execute her slightest orders.

Perhaps, also, as everything becomes magnified by contrast, this beauty, which we have described as marvellous, was still further enhanced by the ugliness of a fourth personage, who stood erect, mute, and motionless, before the young girl, and with whom she was in vain endeavouring to negotiate a bargain respecting one of those beautiful carved ivory fans, which seem as transparent and fragile as a piece of lace.

This person was a spare, bony individual, with yellow complexion, and small, twinkling eyes set obliquely in his face; his head was covered with a broad-brimmed straw hat, from beneath which escaped a long plait falling as low as the middle of his back, and seeming as if a specimen of the hair with which the skull that it sheltered was clad; he wore pantaloons of blue cotton, which reached a little below the knee, and a short blouse of the same colour and material. At his feet lay a bamboo, about two yards long, supporting at each extremity a pair of panniers, the combined weight of which caused the bamboo, when poised on the shoulders of the merchant, to bend like a bow. These panniers were filled with those thousand little nicknacks, which, as well in the colonies as in France, in the open-air *boutique* of the tropical pedlar, as in the elegant *magasins* of Alphonse Giroux and of Susse, turn the heads of young girls, and very frequently, also, of their mothers.

As we have mentioned, the beautiful creole, in the midst of all these wonders which lay spread out upon a mat at her feet, had paused for a moment at the sight of a fan, on which were represented houses, pagodas, impossible palaces, dogs, lions, and fantastic birds; in short, a thousand portraits of men, buildings, and animals, which never existed, save in the droll imaginations of the inhabitants of Canton and Peking.

She demanded then, purely and simply, the price of this fan. But there lay the difficulty. The Chinese, having arrived in the island but a few days previously, knew not a single word either of French, English, or Italian; an ignorance which was clearly proclaimed by his silence at the triple demand, which had been successively made in these three languages. This ignorance was already so well known in the colony, that the stranger from the banks of the Yellow River was designated at Port Louis by no other name than that of *Miko-Miko*; the only two words he pronounced as he trotted through the streets of the city, bearing his long bamboo poised sometimes on the one shoulder sometimes on the other, and which in all probability meant to say, "*Buy, buy.*" The relations which had hitherto been established between Miko-Miko and his customers, were therefore purely and simply those of signs and gestures; but as the young girl had never had occasion to study deeply the language of the Abbé de l'Épée, she found it perfectly impossible either to comprehend Miko-Miko, or make herself understood by him.

It was at this moment that the stranger approached her.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," said he, addressing the young lady, "but seeing the embarrassing situation in which you are placed, I am emboldened to offer you my services. Can I be of any assistance to you, and will you deign to accept me as an interpreter?"

"Oh, monsieur," replied the governess, while the cheeks of the young girl were suffused with a tinge of the deepest and most beautiful carnation,— "Oh, monsieur, a thousand thanks for your obliging offer; Mademoiselle Sara and myself have been for the last ten minutes exhausting our entire stock of philological knowledge, without being able to succeed in making this man understand us. We have spoken to him by turns in French, English, and Italian, and he has not replied to any of these languages."

"Perhaps monsieur knows some other language which this man can speak, ma mie Henriette," replied

the young girl, "and I so long to possess this fan, that if monsieur can succeed in getting him to tell me the price, he will have rendered me a real service."

"But you see clearly that this is impossible," replied *ma mie* Henriette; "this man speaks no language."

"He speaks that of his own country, at least," said the stranger.

"Yes; but then he is a Chinese, and who is there that speaks Chinese?"

The stranger smiled, and, turning towards the pedlar, addressed some words to him in a foreign tongue.

It would be impossible to describe the expression of astonishment which was depicted on the countenance of poor Miko-Miko, when the beloved accents of his native country, like the echoes of a far off melody, once more sounded in his ears; he let fall the fan which he was holding in his hand, and with eyes fixed, and mouth wide agape with astonishment, darted towards the individual who had addressed to him these much loved words, seized his hand, and covered it with kisses; then, as the stranger repeated the question which he had already put, he at length decided to reply. But it was with an expression in the eye, and an accent in the voice which formed one of the most singular contrasts that could possibly be imagined; for, with the tenderest and most sentimental air in the world, he proceeded in plain terms to inform him of the price of the fan.

"It is twenty pounds sterling, *mademoiselle*," said the stranger, turning towards the young beauty, "almost ninety piastres."

"A thousand thanks, *monsieur*," replied Sara, blushing anew; then turning towards her governess:—

"Is it not truly fortunate, *ma mie* Henriette," said she, in English, "that *monsieur* speaks this man's language?"

"And, above all, very astonishing," replied Henriette.

"It is nevertheless a very simple matter, ladies,"

replied the stranger, in the same language; "my mother died when I was about three months old, and they gave me for a nurse a poor woman of the island of Formosa, who was in the service of our family. Her language was therefore the first that I lisped, and although I have not often had occasion since to speak it, I was able, as you saw, to recollect a few words, a circumstance on which I shall congratulate myself all my life, since I have been able, thanks to these few words, to render you a slight service."

Then gliding into the hand of the Chinese a Spanish doubloon, and making a sign to his domestic to follow him, the young man sprang into the saddle and departed at a hand gallop, saluting, with an air of perfect ease and high-breeding, Mademoiselle Sara and her friend ma mie Henriette.

The stranger turned into the Rue de Moka, but scarcely had he proceeded a mile along the road which leads to the Pailles, and reached the foot of Mount Discovery, when he suddenly paused, and fixed his eyes upon a rustic seat constructed upon the brow of the hill, in the centre of which was seated in a state of perfect immobility, his hands placed upon his knees, and his eyes fixed upon the sea, the figure of an old man. For an instant the stranger gazed at this man with an air of doubt; then, as if all hesitation had vanished before a feeling of perfect conviction:—

"It is, indeed, he!" murmured the stranger; "but good God, how changed!"

Then, after having regarded this figure for a few moments with an appearance of singular interest, the young man took a road by which he could reach the old man without being himself observed; a manoeuvre which he executed successfully, although two or three times during the progress of his ascent, he had paused in his walk, and pressed his hand upon his heart, as though endeavouring to still its beatings, or calm an emotion which he felt was too violent to be borne.

As for the old man, he stirred not at the approach of

the stranger, so that one might have imagined he had not even heard the sound of his footsteps, a supposition which would have been erroneous, for scarcely had the young man seated himself on the bench beside him, than the latter turned his head towards him, and bowing with an air of timidity, rose, and retired a few paces off.

"Oh! do not let me disturb you, sir," said the stranger.

The old man, thus invited to remain, reseated himself on the bench, no longer however in the middle, but at its furthest extremity.

A silence of some duration now ensued; the old man continued to gaze at the sea, and the stranger, who appeared lost in the contemplation of his aged companion, after a few moments of deep and silent reverie, at last spoke.

"Sir," said he to his neighbour, "doubtless you were not here about an hour and a half ago, when the Leicester cast anchor in the harbour?"

"Pardon me, monsieur, I was here," replied the old man, with an accent in which humility and astonishment were blended.

"You take no interest, then, I suppose," resumed the stranger, "in the arrival of this ship from Europe?"

"Why not, monsieur?" demanded the old man, more and more astonished.

"Because, in that case, in place of remaining here, you would have descended to the harbour, like all the rest."

"You deceive yourself, monsieur—you deceive yourself," replied the old man, shaking his venerable locks with a melancholy air; "on the contrary, I am very certain that I take a far more lively interest in this spectacle than any person in the island. Every time, for the last fourteen years, that a ship has arrived, it matters not from what country, I have come here to see if it might not have brought me letters from my children, or my children themselves; and as it would be too fatiguing for me to be on my feet so long, I come in the morning

to seat myself here in the same place from which I watched their departure, and I remain here all the day, until, every one having retired to their homes, all hope is lost for me."

"But why do you not go down to the port yourself?" demanded the stranger.

"I did so for the first few years," replied the old man, "but then I knew my fate too quickly, and as each fresh disappointment became more painful, I ended by remaining here, and sending my negro Telemachus in my place. So hope lasts longer. If he returns quickly, I fancy he comes to announce their arrival; should he delay, I imagine that he is waiting for letters. But he more frequently returns empty-handed. Then I rise and return homewards alone as I came; I re-enter my solitary dwelling, and pass the night in weeping and consoling myself with the reflexion that I shall be more fortunate next time."

"My poor father!" murmured the stranger.

"You pity me, monsieur!" exclaimed the old man in astonishment.

"I do, indeed, pity you from my heart," replied his companion.

"You know not then who I am?"

"You are a man, and you suffer."

"But I am a mulatto," replied the old man, in a low tone of the deepest humiliation.

A deep flush passed over the brow of the stranger.

"And I, also, monsieur, am a mulatto," replied he.

"You!" cried the old man.

"Yes, I," replied the stranger.

"You a mulatto! you, monsieur?" And the old man gazed with astonishment at the blue and red ribbon knotted at the stranger's button-hole. "You are a mulatto! Oh! then, your pity no longer astonishes me; I took you at first for a white man, but from the moment you inform me that you are a man of colour like myself, it is another thing; you are a friend, a brother."

"Yes, yes, a friend, a brother," said the young man, holding out both his hands towards his aged companion. Then he murmured in a low voice to himself, as he regarded him with an indefinable expression of tenderness and love, "and perhaps still more."

"Then, I can tell you all," continued the old man. "Ah! I feel that it will relieve my heart to speak of my griefs and anxieties. You must know, monsieur, that I have, or rather I had—for God alone knows if both be yet alive—two children—two sons, both of whom I loved with a parent's love, but one more particularly."

The stranger trembled, and drew nearer to his companion.

"It astonishes you, does it not," continued the old man, "that I should make a difference between these two children, and that I should prefer one to the other? That ought not to be, I know; I confess it is unjust, but it was the younger, it was the weaker, and that must be my excuse."

The stranger raised his hand to his forehead, and profiting by the moment when the old man, ashamed of the confession he had just made, turned aside his head, he wiped away a tear.

"Oh! if you had but known them both," continued the old man, "you would have understood my feelings; not that George—he was called George—not that George was the handsomest; oh, no, on the contrary, his brother Jacques was much better looking than he; but there was in his poor little body a mind so intelligent, so ardent, so firm, that, had I put him to the college of Port Louis with the other children, I am very certain that, although but twelve years old, he would soon have distanced all the other pupils."

The eyes of the old man shone for an instant with pride and enthusiasm; but this gleam passed away with the rapidity of lightning, and his countenance had already resumed its vague, timid, and blank expression, when he added—

"But I could not place him at the college here. The college was founded for whites, and we are but mulattoes."

The countenance of the young man lighted up, in its turn, and a fiery glance of disdain and savage passion swept over his features.

The old man continued, without even remarking the stranger's emotion.

"It was for that reason that I sent both to France, in the hope that education would tame the restless disposition of the elder, and subdue the too obstinate character of the second; but it would appear that Providence approved not of my design, for in an excursion which he made to Brest, Jacques embarked on board a privateer, and since then I have heard from him but three times, and each time from an opposite quarter of the globe; and George has permitted this germ of inflexibility, which affrighted me, to develop itself in him, and to increase with his growth. George has written to me often, sometimes from England, sometimes from Egypt, sometimes from Spain, for he also has travelled much, and although his letters are very beautiful, I declare to you that I have never dared to show them to any one."

"So neither the one nor the other has ever written to you to apprise you of the period of his return?"

"Never; and who knows even if I shall ever see them again; for, although the moment when I shall behold them will be to me the happiest of my life, I have never commanded them to return. If they live elsewhere, it is doubtless because they are happier than they would be here; if they feel not the desire of once more beholding their old father, it is because they have met with people in Europe who love them better than I do. Let it be then according to their own wish, above all if this wish conduce to their happiness. Yet, though I regret both equally, it is George whom I miss the most, and it is he who has the most deeply hurt me in never speaking of his return."

"If he speaks not to you of his return, monsieur," rejoined the stranger, in a voice whose emotion he sought in vain to suppress, "it is perhaps because he wishes to give you a surprise, and to cause a day, begun in pain and anxiety, to conclude in joy and happiness."

"Would to God it were so," said the old man, raising his eyes and hands to heaven.

"It is perhaps," continued the stranger, in a voice of still greater emotion, "because he wishes to glide unrecognised to your side, and thus enjoy your presence, your love, and your benediction."

"Ah! it would be impossible for me not to recognise him."

"And yet," cried the young man, unable any longer to resist the feelings which agitated him, "and yet you have not recognised me, father."

"You—you!" cried the old man, in his turn, running a hurried and searching glance over the stranger's figure, his mouth half-opened with a doubting smile, whilst he trembled violently in every limb. Then shaking his head,—


"No, no—it is not George," said he; "there is, indeed, some resemblance between you and him, but he is not so tall, nor so handsome as you; he is but a child, and you—you are a man."

"It is I—it is indeed I, father! What! do you not recognise me then?" cried George; "recollect that fourteen years have elapsed since I saw you, recollect that I am nearly twenty-six years of age, and if you still doubt—hold! look here at this scar on my forehead, it is the mark of the sabre cut given me by M. de Malmédie, on the day when you so gloriously captured a British flag. Oh! then open your arms to me, my dearest father, and when you have embraced me—when you have pressed me to your heart—you will no longer doubt that I am your son!"

At these words the stranger threw himself on the neck of the old man, who looking alternately upwards to heaven and on his child, could not believe in so much

happiness, and could hardly decide upon embracing the handsome young man before him, until the latter had repeated twenty times that he was indeed his own George.

At this moment Telemachus appeared at the foot of Mount Discovery, his arms hanging listlessly by his side, his eye dull and sorrowful, and his head drooping upon his breast, in despair that he was obliged once more to return to his master without being able to bring him any tidings of either of his dear children.



CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANSFORMATION.

Our readers must now permit us to leave this father and son to the enjoyment of their felicity, and, accompanying us as we retrace our steps, consent to follow, under our guidance, the physical and moral transformation which fourteen years had caused in the hero of this tale, whom we first introduced as a child, and whom we now present to them a man.

We had, at first, intended simply to lay before the reader the narrative of these fourteen years, just as it was related by George to his father; but having considered, on reflection, that this recital being also a complete history of his hidden thoughts and secret sensations; one might naturally feel inclined to doubt the impartiality of a man of George's character, especially when speaking of himself, we have accordingly resolved to relate ourselves, and in our own way, this history, each detail of which is familiar to us; and as our own self-love is nowise engaged in the affair, we engage to hide no sensation, whether good or bad, no thought, whether honourable or dishonourable.

Let us then commence from the same point from which George himself took his departure.

Pierre Munier, whose character we have already endeavoured to sketch, had from his first entry into active life, that is to say, from the period when from a child he became a man, adopted with the whites a line of conduct from which he never swerved. Feeling in himself neither the strength nor the will to combat, as a duellist, an overwhelming prejudice, he had taken the resolution of disarming his adversaries by a system of unalterable submission and inexhaustible humility. His entire life was occupied in apologizing for his birth.

Far from aiming, despite his wealth and intelligence, at any administrative function, any civil employment, or political distinction, he had constantly sought to remain in obscurity, by mingling in the general crowd.

The same thought which had driven him from public guided him in private life. Generous and munificent by nature, he kept his household with monastic simplicity. In his dwelling, although possessor of nearly four hundred slaves—which in the colonies constitutes a fortune of more than two hundred thousand livres a year—abundance was everywhere, luxury nowhere. He always travelled on horseback, until compelled by age, or rather by the cares and sorrows which had prematurely broken down his constitution, to change his modest habit into a more aristocratic one; and even then he purchased a palanquin as devoid of ornament as that of the poorest inhabitant of the island.

Ever careful to avoid the slightest quarrel; ever polite, complaisant, and at the service of every one, even of those towards whom, at the bottom of his heart, he entertained a feeling of dislike, he would rather have lost ten acres of ground than have undertaken or even defended a lawsuit by which he might have gained twenty. Did any inhabitant of the island, no matter whom, require a plan for a coffee or sugarcane plantation, he was certain of finding it at Pierre Munier's, who even thanked him into the bargain for giving him the preference. All these kindnesses, which were in reality the promptings of his own generous and excellent heart, but which appeared the result of his naturally timid disposition, had procured for him, indeed, the friendship of his neighbours; but it was a sort of passive friendship, which, never entertaining even the idea of conferring a benefit, restricts itself simply to the avoidance of doing injury. Yet, even among these professing friends, there were found some who, unable to pardon Pierre Munier for his immense fortune, his numerous slaves, and his stainless reputation, sought unceasingly for an opportunity of crushing him beneath.

the prejudice of colour. M. de Malmédie and his son Henri were of this number.

George, born in the same condition as his father, but whom the delicacy of his constitution had withheld from bodily exercises, had directed all his mental faculties towards reflection; and mature before his age, like sickly children in general, he had instinctively followed his father's line of conduct, the motives of which, young as he was, he had succeeded in penetrating; but the manly pride which boiled in the breast of the child caused him to imbibe a feeling of hatred towards the whites who despised him, and disdain for the mulattoes who permitted themselves to be despised. He had, in consequence, secretly resolved to pursue a line of conduct diametrically opposite to that of his father, and when age and strength should enable him to do so, to march with bold and undaunted steps to the encounter of these absurd prejudices of caste and opinion, firmly resolved, should they not give way before him, to seize them bodily, like the Antæan Hercules, and stifle them in his arms. The young Hannibal, excited by his father, swore eternal hatred to a nation—the young George, despite his father, swore an uncompromising war against a prejudice.

George quitted the colony after the scene we have already described, arrived safely in France, and, with his brother Jacques, entered the *Collège Napoléon*. Scarcely was he seated upon the benches of the junior class, than he comprehended the difference of ranks, and aspired to reach the first forms: for him superiority was a necessity of his organization, and he learned quickly and well. A first triumph strengthened his determination by teaching him the measure of his power; his will became stronger and his success proportionately greater. It must, however, be said that this labour of the mind, this development of the thought, left the body in its primitive state of infirmity; the moral absorbed the physical power, the blade consumed the scabbard; but Providence had given a support to the weak and tender

sapling. George reposed in peace under the protecting arm of Jacques, who was the strongest and the idlest boy in the class, as George was the weakest but also the most studious.

Unhappily, this state of things lasted but for a short time. Two years after their arrival, during the vacation which Jacques and George had gone to spend at Brest, in the family of a merchant to whose protection they had been confided by their father, Jacques, who had always evinced a marked predilection for the sea, profited by an occasion which offered itself, and, tired of his prison, as he called the school, embarked on board a privateer, which he gave his father to understand, in a letter he wrote to him, was a government ship-of-war. On his return to school, George felt keenly the absence of his brother. Utterly defenceless against those feelings of jealousy which his scholastic triumphs had excited against him, and which, from the moment they could be gratified, strengthened into hatred, she was shunned by some, beaten by others, ill-treated by all: each bore against him some peculiar grudge which he was by no means backward in indulging. This was a hard trial, but George supported it courageously.

He reflected only more deeply than ever upon his position, and the result was his conviction that moral superiority was nothing without physical superiority; that one was necessary to make the other respected, and that the union of these two qualities alone formed the perfect man. From that hour he completely changed his manner of living; from being timid, retired, inactive, he became noisy, gamesome, and turbulent. He still worked hard, but only sufficiently so to enable him to preserve that degree of intellectual pre-eminence which he had acquired in preceding years. In his first essays in this new state of life he was awkward, and was consequently laughed at. George took this pleasantry in ill part, and that too designedly. He was not endowed by nature with sanguine, but rather with bilious courage; that is to say, in place of casting himself headlong into

danger, his first impulse was, on the contrary, to retreat in order to avoid it. He required reflection in order to be brave, and, although this courage is the more genuine, because it is moral courage, he was affrighted at it, as though it had been cowardice.

He fought therefore at each quarrel; in these engagements he was of course many times beaten, but, vanquished once, he recommenced every day, until he was conqueror in his turn; and he conquered, not because he was the stronger, but rather because he was the more warlike—because, in the middle of the fiercest engagement, he ever preserved an admirable coolness of temper, by which he was enabled to take advantage of the slightest fault committed by his adversary. This procured him respect, and, from this moment, his companions began to look twice before they insulted him; for, weak as an enemy may be, his opponents hesitate to attack him, if they are aware he is a determined one. Besides, the extreme ardour with which he embraced this new life produced its natural results. By degrees he acquired strength, and thus encouraged by his first essays, George, during the following vacation, did not once open a book. He commenced to learn to swim, to fence, to ride, imposing upon himself constant fatigues, which more than once threw him into a fever, but to which he at length ended by habituating himself. Then to these exercises of skill and address he added manual labour. During entire hours he dug the earth like a daily labourer; for entire days he bore burdens like a porter; then, in the evening, in place of retiring to a soft, warm bed, he would wrap himself in his cloak, throw himself upon a bear-skin, and there repose during the night. For an instant, astonished Nature hesitated, scarcely knowing whether to give way or triumph. George was aware that he staked his life almost on a cast; but of what value was life to him unless accompanied by superior strength and superior address? Nature proved the most powerful: physical debility, vanquished by the energy of will, disappeared like a

faithless servant chased from the presence of a severe and offended master. In short, three months of a similar regimen wrought such a change in the poor, weak, and sickly child, that, on his return, his comrades were almost unable to recognise him. Then it was he who sought quarrels with the others, and, in his turn, overcame those who had so many times before beaten him. Then it was he who was feared, and being feared, was consequently respected.

Moreover, by a natural harmony, in proportion as strength was diffused over his body, beauty shone in his face. George had always had superb eyes and a magnificent set of teeth. He let his long black hair grow, the native stubbornness of which, by dint of care and attention, he succeeded in correcting. The sickly pallor of his complexion gave place to a delicately pale hue, not devoid in itself of grace and expression, and which imparted an air of distinction to his entire person. In a word, the youth studied to be handsome, just as the boy had striven to gain strength and activity.

Consequently, when George, after having gone through his course of philosophy, left college, he was a handsome young man of about five feet four inches in height, but, as we have said, although slight in figure, he was admirably formed. He knew almost all that a young man of the world ought to know, but he felt that it was not sufficient to be of the calibre of ordinary men merely; he decided that in all things he should be their superior.

For the rest, the studies which he had resolved to impose upon himself, became comparatively easy to him, unembarrassed, as he now was, of all his scholastic labours, and completely master from henceforth of the disposition of his time. He laid down certain rules for the employment of his day, from which he resolved not to depart. At six o'clock every morning he rode out on horseback; at eight he went to the shooting gallery; from ten till twelve he fenced; from noon till two he attended the course of lectures at the Sorbonne; from

three till five he painted or designed, sometimes in one *atelier*, sometimes in another; and lastly, his evenings were spent either at the theatre or in the salons of the fashionable world, into which latter, the elegance and polish of his address, much more than his large fortune, procured him an easy entrance.

George had thus become acquainted with all that Paris could boast of, in the literary, scientific, and artistic, as well as in the fashionable and aristocratic world; and, equally familiar with the arts, science, and fashion, he was ere long cited by all, as one of the cleverest and wittiest men, one of the deepest and most logical thinkers and philosophers, and one of the most brilliant and distinguished men of fashion in the capital. George had therefore almost attained his end.

There still however remained one last proof to undergo: certain of being master of others, he was yet ignorant whether he was master of himself. Now George was not a man to entertain, for any length of time, a doubt upon any subject whatever. He resolved, therefore, without delay to enlighten himself upon the state of his own mind and disposition.

George had often feared lest he should become a gambler.

One evening he left home, his pockets filled with gold, and took the way towards Frascati's. He had said to himself: "I will play three times, and each time for three hours together; during these three hours I will risk ten thousand francs, and whether I win or lose, after these three times I shall play no more."

The first day, George lost his ten thousand francs in less than an hour and a half. Nevertheless, he remained his three hours watching the play of the others, and although he had in his pocket-book, in billets-de-banque, the twenty thousand francs which he had determined to hazard in the two remaining essays which yet remained for him to make, he did not stake a single louis more than he had originally intended.

The second day, George gained at first twenty-five

thousand francs; then, as he had imposed upon himself the task of playing for three hours, he continued to play, and lost the entire of his previous winnings, with the addition of two thousand francs of his own money. At this moment, having perceived that the three hours had expired, he ceased with the same punctuality as he had done the evening before.

The third day, George commenced by losing, but at his last billet-de-banque the tide of fortune turned in his favour. There still remained for him three-quarters of an hour to play, and during this brief period of time, George played with one of those strange runs of luck, which old gamblers, and frequenters of the gaming-houses perpetuate by oral traditions: during these three-quarters of an hour, George seemed as if he had made a paction with some evil spirit by whose aid an invisible demon whispered in his ear the colour which was about to come up and the card which would gain. Gold and notes were heaped on piles before him, to the complete stupefaction of the assistants. George no longer troubled himself about his stakes; he cast his money upon the table, saying to the banker: "Where you please;" the banker staked the money at hazard, and George won. Two professed gamblers who had hitherto followed this vein of luck, and had gained, in consequence, an enormous sum of money, now fancied that the moment had at length arrived to adopt another style of play, and they consequently bet against him. But fortune remained faithful to our hero. They lost the whole of their previous winnings, then, all the money they had about them, afterwards, as they were known to the establishment as safe men, they borrowed from the banker fifty thousand francs which they very quickly lost also. As for George, calm and unmoved as ever, he beheld the increase of his little mountain of gold and notes, merely looking from time to time at the dial of the clock which was to sound the hour of his retreat. At length the clock struck. At that instant George stopped, loaded his servant with the gold and notes which he had won, and with the same calm

and impassible countenance with which he had alternately lost and won, he rose from the gaming-table and left the house, envied by all who had witnessed the strange scene which had passed, and who anxiously awaited his coming the following evening.

But, contrary to all expectation, George reappeared no more. He even went further, he threw gold and notes pellmell into a drawer of his secretaire, determining in his own mind not to open the drawer until the expiration of eight days. On the appointed day, George re-opened the drawer and counted his treasure. He had gained two hundred and thirty thousand francs.

George was satisfied with himself, he had overcome a passion.

We have before said that our hero possessed not that physical courage which rushes headlong into danger, but only that sort of bilious courage which awaits danger when it cannot fly it, and faces it when unavoidable. George really feared that he was not brave; and he had often trembled at the idea, that, in cases of imminent peril, he might not be master of himself; nay more, that he might perhaps act as a coward. This idea strangely tormented our hero, and he accordingly resolved to embrace the first opportunity which should offer itself of putting himself to the test. This occasion presented itself in a sufficiently strange and unlooked-for manner.

One day, George, with one of his friends, was at Lepage's shooting gallery, and while waiting until the ground should be free, was amusing himself by looking on at the performances of one of the frequenters of the establishment, known, like himself, as one of the best shots in Paris. The individual who was now shooting, executed by turns all those acts of incredible skill which tradition attributes to St. George, and which drive all beginners to despair; that is to say, he hit the bull's eye every time, repeated his shots in such a manner that the impress of his second ball exactly covered that of the first, split a bullet upon a pen-knife, and, in short, attempted, and always with invariable success, a thousand

other experiments of a similar nature. The *amour propre* of the marksman, it must be said, was still further excited by the presence of George, whom the assistant, while presenting to him the pistol, had informed him was of equal skill with himself as a marksman; so that at each shot he surpassed himself, but at each shot, instead of receiving from his neighbour the tribute of praise which he deserved, he heard on the contrary George, in reply to the exclamations of astonishment which proceeded from the gallery, say, "Yes, certainly it is a good shot, but it would be another thing if monsieur was firing at a man."

This constant denial of his address as a duellist, at first simply astonished the marksman, but ended at length by wounding him; he therefore turned round towards George at the moment when the latter had for the third time given utterance to the sceptical opinion we have just mentioned, and regarding him with an air, half jeering half threatening:—

"*Pardon*, monsieur," said he, "but it seems to me that you have two or three times given utterance to a doubt insulting to my courage; would you be kind enough to give me a clear and precise explanation of your words?"

"My words require no commentary, monsieur," replied George, "and, as it seems to me, sufficiently explain themselves."

"Then, sir," rejoined the marksman, "have the kindness to repeat them once more, in order that I may appreciate, at the same time, both their bearing and the intention which dictated them."

"I said," replied George, with the most perfect tranquillity, "when seeing you hit the bull's eye every shot, that you would not be so certain either of your hand or your eye if, in place of aiming at a target, you had to direct your pistol against the breast of a man."

"And pray why not, may I ask?" demanded the marksman.

"Because it seems to me, that, at the moment of firing

at his fellow creature, every man must feel a certain emotion sufficient to derange his aim."

"Have you fought many duels, monsieur?" demanded the marksman.

"Not even one," replied George.

"In that case, I am not astonished at your supposing that, under the circumstances you mention, one might be afraid," rejoined the stranger with a smile, through which pierced a slight shade of irony.

"Excuse me, sir," replied George; "but I see that you have misunderstood me: at the moment of killing a man, one may tremble from other emotions than those of fear."

"I never tremble, sir," said the marksman.

"Very possibly," replied George, with the same phlegm, "but I am not the less convinced, that at twenty-five paces—that is to say, at the same distance at which you hit the bull's eye every shot——"

"Well, at twenty-five paces?" said the stranger.

"At twenty-five paces you would miss a man," continued George.

"And for my part I am certain of the contrary, monsieur."

"You must permit me to doubt your mere assertion."

"Then you give me the lie, sir?"

"No: I merely assert a fact."

"A fact of which, I suppose, you would hesitate to make the experiment?" replied the stranger, with a sneering laugh.

"Why so?" replied George, regarding him fixedly.

"But upon another, rather than upon your own person, I presume."

"Upon another or myself, it is perfectly indifferent to me."

"It would be a rash act, I warn you, monsieur, to risk such a proof."

"No, for I have spoken as I think, and consequently my conviction is, that I should run scarcely any risk."

"So, sir, you repeat for the second time, that at twenty-five paces I should miss my man?"

"You deceive yourself, monsieur; it is not for the second time that I repeat it, but, if I recollect right, for the fifth."

"Sir, this is too much, you mean to insult me."

"You are at liberty to believe that such is my intention, if you think proper."

"Very well, sir. Your hour?"

"This instant, if you please."

"The place?"

"We are scarcely five hundred paces from the Bois de Boulogne."

"Your arms?"

"My arms! why pistols, of course. It is not a duel we are going to fight, it is an experiment we are about to try."

"I am at your service, monsieur."

"On the contrary, it is I who am at yours."

The two young men got into their cabriolats, each accompanied by his friend.

Arrived upon the ground, the two seconds endeavoured to arrange the affair; but this was a difficult matter. George's adversary demanded an apology, but George maintained that he owed the apology only in case he should be killed or wounded, since then only he would be proved to be in the wrong.

The two seconds lost a quarter of an hour in negotiations which led to no satisfactory result.

They then endeavoured to place the adversaries at thirty paces from each other, but George begged to observe, that the experiment could not be fairly tried if they did not adopt the distance from which they usually fired at the mark, viz. twenty-five paces. They therefore measured twenty-five paces.

Then they wished to toss up, in order to decide who should fire first; but George declared that he regarded this preliminary as useless, since the right of priority naturally belonged to his adversary. George's adversary, on his side, piqued on a point of honour, insisted

that they should decide this point by lot, as between two men of such equal skill, such a priority gave every advantage to him who should obtain it. But our hero was firm, and his adversary was obliged to yield. The attendant of the shooting gallery had followed the combatants. He charged the pistols with the same measure, the same powder, and the same bullets, as those with which they had been previously practising. The same pistols also were used. George had insisted on this condition as a *sine quâ non*.

The adversaries were placed at a distance of twenty-five paces, and each received from the hands of his second a loaded pistol. These preliminaries arranged, the seconds withdrew, leaving the principals to fire in the manner and according to the order arranged.

George took none of the precautions in general observed by duellists on similar occasions; he did not attempt to shield any part of his body with his pistol. He let his arm hang down along his thigh, and presented to his adversary's aim the full front of his chest entirely disarmed.

His adversary on his part did not know what to think of such conduct: he had frequently been engaged in similar affairs, but never had he beheld such cool bravery. The deep-rooted conviction felt by George accordingly began to produce its effect. This skilful marksman, who had never missed his aim, doubted his own powers.

Twice he raised his pistol upon George, and twice he lowered it. This proceeding was contrary to all the rules of duelling, but at each time our hero contented himself with saying:—

“Do not hurry yourself, sir; take time.”

At the third attempt he felt ashamed of himself, and fired.

There was a moment of terrible suspense for the seconds. But scarcely had the ball sped, when George turned successively to the right and left and bowed to the two gentlemen as a signal that he was not hit.

"Well, monsieur," said he to his adversary, "you see that I was in the right when I asserted that in firing upon a man, one is less certain of his aim than when shooting at a target."

"Tis well, monsieur," replied George's adversary, "I was wrong. Fire in your turn."

"I!" said George, picking up his hat which he had placed on the ground, and returning his pistol to the assistant, "I fire upon you!—what for?"

"Why, it is your right, sir," cried his adversary, "and I cannot possibly suffer it to be otherwise. Besides, I am curious to see how you yourself will aim."

"Pardon me, monsieur," said George, with the most imperturbable *sang froid*, "let us understand each other, if you please. I did not say that I could hit you, I merely asserted that you would not hit me. You have not hit me. I was in the right—that's all."

And despite all the arguments which his adversary could make use of to induce him to fire in his turn, George stepped into his cabriolet, and took the road towards the Barrière de l'Etoile, repeating to his friend as he drove along:—

"Well, did I not tell you there was a vast difference between firing at a puppet and shooting at a man?"

George was satisfied with himself, for he now felt certain of his courage.

These two adventures made, as it may be supposed, some noise in the world, and placed our hero in a good position in society. But at the very moment when the world believed him to be most enchained by its fascinations, as the period fixed by himself for his departure had arrived, one fine morning George bade farewell to Paris and set out from London.

Arrived in London, George presented himself everywhere, and was everywhere well received. He kept horses and dogs, rode steeple-chases, hunted and shot. He took all bets offered, gained and lost large sums with aristocratic *sang froid*; in short, at the end of a year, he left London with the character of a *perfect gentleman*,

as he had quitted Paris with the reputation of *un charmant cavalier*. It was during this sojourn in the capital of Great Britain, that our hero had met Lord William Murray, but, as we have said, without forming any acquaintance with him.

It was then the period when travels in the East were just coming into fashion. George visited in succession, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. He was presented to Mehemet Ali at the moment when Ibrahim Pacha was about to undertake the expedition to Saïd. He accompanied the viceroy's son, fought under his eye, and received from him a sabre of honour, and a pair of Arab horses chosen from among the finest in his stables.

George returned to France, *viâ* Italy. The expedition to Spain was preparing. Our hero hastened to Paris, and demanded permission to serve as a volunteer: his request was granted. George took his place in the ranks of the first battalion on the line of march, and found himself constantly in the vanguard.

Unfortunately, contrary to all expectation, the Spaniards did not hold their ground, and this campaign, which every one had imagined would have been so bloody, was after all scarcely better than a military review. At Trocadero, however, the complexion of affairs changed, and it soon became apparent that it would be necessary to carry by force this last barrier of the peninsular revolution.

As the regiment to which George had attached himself had not been ordered for the assault, our hero exchanged into the grenadiers. The breach effected, and the signal for the escalade given, George rushed forward at the head of the column of attack, and entered third into the fort.

His name was honourably mentioned in the dispatches, and he received from the hands of the Duke d'Angoulême the cross of the Legion of Honour, and from those of Ferdinand VII. the cross of Charles III. George had had no other end in view save that of obtaining some honorary distinction; he had obtained

two. The proud young man was overwhelmed with joy.

He now conceived that the fitting moment had arrived for his return to the Isle of France. All that he had hoped for or dreamt of was accomplished; all his expectations of success were even surpassed. He had no longer anything to accomplish in Europe. His combat with civilization was over, that with barbarism was about to commence. His was a soul full of generous pride and enthusiasm, which could not content itself with spending in European happiness that strength so precious amassed for a civil war. All that he had done for the last ten years of his life, was with the sole view of surpassing his mulatto and white compatriots, and in order to be enabled, singly and unaided, to destroy that prejudice which no man of colour had as yet dared to combat. Little cared he for Europe and her hundred and fifty millions of inhabitants, or France and its thirty-three millions of souls: what mattered to him deputation or ministry, republic or royalty? What he preferred to all the world besides, what preoccupied his mind before all else, was his own little corner of earth, lost on the terrestrial chart like a grain of sand at the bottom of the sea. And for this reason, that upon this little speck of earth there was a great blow to be struck, a grand problem to be solved. He had but one recollection, that of having borne the yoke; but one hope, that of throwing it off for ever.

Meanwhile, the Leicester, on her passage to the Mauritius where she was to be stationed, touched at Cadiz. George requested a passage on board this noble frigate, and highly recommended as he was, by both French and Spanish authorities, he obtained his wishes. The true cause, however, of this favour being granted, it must be said, was, that Lord William Murray had learned that it was a native of the Isle of France who solicited a passage, and he was by no means sorry to have, during a voyage of four thousand leagues, a companion who could give him beforehand those thousand little particulars, both moral and political.

with which it is so important for a governor to be thoroughly acquainted, before placing his foot on shore at the seat of his government.

We have already seen how George and Lord William Murray had gradually become acquainted, and to what point their intimacy had arrived, at the moment of their landing at Port Louis.

We have seen again, how George, although a dutiful son and devotedly attached to his father, had not made himself known to the latter, until after one of those long proofs which had become familiar to him. The joy of the old man was so much the greater that he by no means expected his return; and then again, he who had returned was so very different from the person expected, that during their walk towards Moka, the father was never tired of regarding his son, and pausing before him, from time to time, as if in contemplation; and on each occasion, the old man would press his son to his heart, with so much parental affection and joy, that George, despite his habitual self-command, more than once felt the tears start into his eyes.

After a walk of three hours, they reached the skirts of the plantation. When at a short distance from the house, Telemachus hastened on in advance of them, so that, on their arrival, George and his father found all the negroes, with feelings of mingled joy and fear, assembled to await their coming; for this young man, whom they had last seen as a child, was now come back to them as a new master—and what sort of a master would he prove?

This return was, therefore, a question of future happiness or misery for this poor population. The auguries however were favourable: George commenced by giving them a holiday for this and the following day; so, as the day after chanced to be Sunday, these holidays gave them three days of entire repose.

After this, George, impatient to judge for himself of the degree of importance which his landed property would give him in the island, scarcely allowed himself time to dine, and, followed by his father, visited the

entire estate. A series of fortunate speculations, and a course of assiduous and well-directed labour, had made it one of the most beautiful properties of the colony. In the centre of the estate was situated the dwelling-house, a simple yet spacious building, surrounded by a triple shade of bananas, mangoes, and tamarind-trees, opening in front upon a long alley of trees, leading to the high road, and in the rear upon a fragrant lawn, where the double-flowered grenadine, gently agitated by the breeze, caressed by turns a bouquet of purple oranges, or a clump of yellow bananas, gracefully bending on its slender stalk with a fluttering and capricious motion, like a bee hovering between two flowers, or a mind balancing between two desires. Then, all around, as far as the eye could reach, extended a succession of immense plantations of maize and sugar-cane, which, as if fatigued with their mellow charge, seemed to implore the hands of the husbandman to relieve them of their burden.

Then at length they reached what in every plantation goes by the name of the Negroes' Camp.

In the middle of the Camp stood a large building, serving in winter for a barn, and in the summer for a ball-room. Loud bursts of merriment were now heard issuing from the building, mingled with the sounds of the tamburine, the tom-tom, and the Malgache harp. The negroes, profiting by their holydays, had lost no time in getting up a little merry-making; for in these primitive natures there are no clouds; from labour they turn to pleasure, and repose from their fatigue by dancing. George and his father opened the door and appeared all at once among them.

The ball was forthwith interrupted: each ranged himself alongside his partner, endeavouring to fall into ranks like a party of soldiers surprised by their colonel. Then after a moment of agitated silence, three rounds of applause saluted their masters. This time it was indeed the frank and complete expression of their sentiments. Well fed, well clothed, rarely punished, because rarely failing in their duties, they adored Pierre

Munier, the sole individual perhaps amongst the mulattoes of the colony, who, humble before the whites, was not cruel and arbitrary with the negro population. As for George, whose return had as we have said inspired serious uneasiness in the breasts of these poor people, as if divining the effect that his presence among them had produced, he raised his hand in token that he wished to address them. Forthwith the most profound silence was established, and the negroes listened, in anxious silence, to the following words which fell from his lips, slow as a promise, solemn as an engagement:—

“My friends,” said he, “I am deeply touched with the kind welcome which you have given me; and still more at the happiness which shines upon all faces here. My father renders you happy; I know it, and I thank him for it; for it is my duty, as it is his, to seek the happiness of those who will I hope obey me, as they have hitherto obeyed him. You are three hundred here, and you have but ninety huts; my father desires that you shall build sixty others, one for each couple; each cabin shall have a little garden, in which you will be permitted to plant tobacco, yams, and potatoes, and each may feed a pig and rear some poultry; those who desire to make money of all these may go and sell them every Sunday morning at Port Louis, and dispose at will of the product of their sale. If a theft be committed, there will be a severe punishment for him who shall have robbed his brother; if any one among you be unjustly punished by the overseer, let him prove that the chastisement was unmerited and justice shall be done him. I make no provision with respect to runaways, for you are, and I hope will be, too happy here ever to think of quitting us.”

Fresh exclamations of joy greeted this little speech, which will doubtless appear to the sixty millions of Europeans who possess the happy privilege of living under a constitutional government, to descend too much into petty minutiae, but which was here received with so much the more enthusiasm, as it was the first charter of the kind that had ever been promulgated in the colony.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BERLOQUE.

ON the evening of the following day, which was as we have said a Saturday, an assembly of negroes, less joyous than that which we have just quitted, were collected together in a vast barn, and, seated round a huge fire composed of dried branches, held tranquilly the berloque, as they call it in the colonies; that is to say, each was employed according to his wants, his temperament, or character, some in making little articles of handicraft, destined to be sold on the following day, others in cooking rice, manioc, or bananas. One was smoking his wooden pipe, containing tobacco not only of native growth, but actually gathered in his own garden; another conversed with his neighbour in a low voice. In the midst of these different groups, the women and children, whose office it was to attend to the fire, went and came unceasingly; but, despite this general activity and motion, and although this evening preceded a day of repose, some gloomy and dispiriting influence appeared to weigh upon these unfortunates. It was the oppression of the manager, himself a mulatto. The *hangar*, or barn, was situated in the lower division of the William plains at the foot of the mountain of the Trois-Mamelles, around which lay the estates of our old acquaintance, M. de Malmédie.

Not that M. de Malmédie was a bad master, in the acceptation which we give to the term in France. No; M. de Malmédie was a little, fat, roundabout personage, incapable of hatred as of vengeance, but puffed up in the highest degree with the idea of his civil and political importance, filled with pride when he reflected upon the purity of the blood which flowed in his veins, and sharing with a native good faith, which had been

handed down from father to son, in the prejudice which, in the Isle of France at this epoch, still pursued men of colour. His slaves were not more unhappy under his rule than under that of others, but they were as unhappy as everywhere else. The explanation of this state of things may be found in the fact, that, in the eyes of M. de Malmédie, negroes were not men, but merely machines, calculated to produce a certain amount of work. Now, when a machine does not perform its functions, it is wound up to its proper power by mechanical means. M. de Malmédie, therefore, simply applied to his slaves the theory which he would have applied to machinery. When the negroes, either from idleness or fatigue, ceased to perform their necessary amount of labour, the overseer wound them up to their task with the whip, the machine then resumed its motive power, and at the end of the week the sum total produced was what it ought to be.

M. Henri de Malmédie was the exact portrait of his father, with twenty years less in age, and a dose of pride more in disposition.

There was, therefore, as we have said before, a wide difference between the physical and moral condition of the negroes of the Williams plains and those belonging to the Moka quarter. Accordingly, in these reunions, designated, as we have said, by the name of *berloques*, gaiety was the spontaneous companion of the slaves of Pierre Munier, whilst, on the contrary, with those of M. de Malmédie, it required to be excited by some song, or jest, or tale. However, under the tropics as in our own country, alike under the *hangar* of the negro and round the bivouac fire of the soldier, there are ever to be found one or more of those jesters, who take upon themselves the duty, often more fatiguing than one imagines, of making the company laugh, and whom the grateful society requites in a thousand different ways; it being properly understood, that, should the company forget to so acquit itself of the debt, a circumstance which occasionally happens, the buffoon in

that case naturally recalls to their mind that he is their creditor.

Now, he who occupied on the estates of M. de Malmédie the position filled in former days by Triboulet and L'Angeli, at the courts of Francis I. and Louis XIII. was a little man, whose amply-developed trunk was supported by a pair of limbs so slight, that, at the first glance, one could scarcely believe in the possibility of such a union. However at the two extremities, the equilibrium, disturbed in the middle, was amply re-established: the muscular torso supported a little face of a bilious yellow colour, whilst the shrivelled limbs terminated in a pair of enormous feet. The arms were of an unmeasured length, resembling in this respect those of that species of ape, which, while walking upon its hind legs, can pick up, without stooping, any object it meets with on its way.

From this assemblage of incoherent forms and disproportioned members, it naturally resulted, that the new character which we have introduced on the stage, presented in his person a singular mixture of the grotesque and the terrible; a mixture in which, to the eyes of a European, the hideous so far predominated, as to inspire, at the first glance, a vivid sensation of disgust and repulsion; but, less ardent partisans of the beautiful, less enthusiastic adorers of form, than ourselves, the negroes looked in general only upon the ludicrous side of the picture, although from beneath his ape's hide the tiger would, from time to time, protrude his claws, and show for an instant his sharp and brilliant teeth.

This personage was called Antonio, and was born at Tingoram; so, to distinguish him from the other Antonios on the estate, whose pride the mistake would have doubtless wounded, he in general went by the appellation of Antonio the Malay.

The berloque was therefore as we have said, sufficiently dull, when Antonio, who had glided unperceived behind one of the huge posts which supported the roof of the *hangar*, protruded his yellow and bilious face,

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and gave utterance to a sharp hiss, like that by which the hooded serpent, one of the most terrible of the reptiles peculiar to the Malay peninsula, generally announces its presence. This sound, if uttered on the plains of Tanassein, in the marshes of Java, or the sands of Quiloa, would have frozen with terror those who might have heard it; but in the Isle of France, where, with the exception of the sharks which swim in shoals around the coast, there are no venomous reptiles or beasts of prey, this cry produced no other effect than that of causing all eyes and mouths to be opened wide in astonishment; then, as if directed by the sound, every head was turned towards the new arrival, and from every mouth burst one single exclamation — “Antonio the Malay!—Viva Antonio!”

Two or three negroes therefore trembled and half raised themselves from their reclining positions; these were natives of Malgache, Yokoff, and Zaquebar, and, in their youth, had heard this terrible hiss, which once heard could never be forgotten.

One of them even rose altogether to his feet. He was a handsome young black, whom one would have taken, had it not been for his colour, for a child of the most beautiful Caucasian race; but scarcely had he recognised the cause of the sound which had thus aroused him from his reverie, than he resumed his former attitude, murmuring to himself with a tone of disdain as marked as the joy of the other slaves,—

“Antonio the Malay.”

Antonio, with three bounds of his long limbs, reached the middle of the circle, then throwing a somerset over the hearth, he fell on the other side, seated in tailor’s fashion, on the ground.

“A song, Antonio!—a song!” cried every voice.

Contrary to the practice of those virtuosos, certain of the effect they will produce, Antonio did not wait to be asked twice, but he drew forth from his *langour* a Jew’s harp, placed the instrument to his mouth, and drew from it a few preparatory notes, in the manner of a

prelude; then, accompanying the words with several grotesque gestures, analogous to the subject, he sang the following French negro song:—

I.

Moi resté dans en p'tit la caze,
 Qu'il faut baissé moi pour entré,
 Mon la tête touché son faitaze,
 Quand mon le pie touché plancé.
 Moi té n'a pas besoin lumière,
 Le soir, quand moi voulé dormi;
 Car pour moi trouvé lune claire
 N'a pas manqué trous, Dié merci!

II.

Mon lit est un p'tit natt' Malgace,
 Mon l'oriellé morceau bois blanc,
 Mon gargoulette un' vié cabbasse,
 Ou moi met l'arack, zour de l'an.
 Quand mon femm' pour fair' p'tit ménaze,
 Sam'di comme ça vini soupé,
 Moi fair' cuir, dans mon p'tit la caze
 Banane sous la cend' grillé.

III.

A mon coffre n'a pas serrure,
 Et jamais moi n'a fermé li.
 Dans bambou comme ça sans ferrure,
 Qui va cherché mon langousi?
 Mais Dimanch' si gagné journée,
 Moi l'achette un morceau d'tabac,
 Et tout la s'maine moi fais fumée
 Dans grand pipe, a moi carouba.

[LITERAL TRANSLATION.]

I dwell in a little hut
 Which I must stoop to enter;
 My head touches the roof,
 While my feet rest on the floor.
 I have no need of light
 In the evening, when I wish to sleep,
 For the moon, when she shines bright,
 Finds her way through many a crevice.
 &c. &c.

It is absolutely necessary that the reader should have lived among this race of simple and primitive people, to have an idea of the effect produced on his hearers by Antonio's song, despite the poverty of the rhymes and simplicity of ideas. At the end of the first and second couplets there was general laughter and applause. At the conclusion of the third, loud shouts, vivas, and huzzas filled the *hangar*. The young negro alone, who had already manifested his disdain of Antonio, shrugged his shoulders with a grimace of disgust.

As for Antonio, in place of enjoying his triumph, as might naturally be supposed, or swelling with importance at the sound of the applause, he supported his elbows on his knees, let his head fall between his hands, and appeared to devote himself to profound meditation. Now, as Antonio was the acknowledged jester of the company, at his silence sadness again took possession of the assembly. They then begged him to tell them a story or sing them another song; but to all these requests Antonio turned a deaf ear, and the most pressing demands obtained no other reply than an obstinate and incomprehensible silence.

At length one of the negroes, who was seated nearest to him, striking him on the shoulder, exclaimed,—

“What ails you, Malay? Are you dead?”

“No,” replied Antonio; “I am perfectly alive.”

“Then what are you doing there?”

“I am thinking.”

“And what are you thinking about?”

“I was thinking,” replied Antonio, “that the time of the berloque is a good time. When the sun has gone down in the west, and the hour of the berloque is come, every one works with pleasure, for each works for himself; although it must be confessed that there are some idlers like you, Toukal, who lose their time in smoking, and certain gluttons who amuse themselves by cooking bananas like you, Cambeba. But, as I said, there are others who work. You, Castor, for example,

make chairs; you, Bonhomme, make wooden spoons; as for you, Nazim, you idle."

"Nazim does what he pleases," replied the young Zanguebar negro. "Nazim is the stag of Anjoan, even as Laïza is the lion, and the deeds of lions and stags do not concern serpents."

Antonio bit his lips; then, after a moment's silence, during which it seemed that the sonorous voice of the young slave still continued to vibrate, he resumed,—

"I was thinking, then, as I told you, that the time of the berloque is a good time; but, in order that labour may not over-fatigue you, Castor, and you, Bonhomme; that your tobacco smoke may seem sweeter to you, Toukal; and that you, Cambeba, may not fall asleep over the fire whilst your banana is cooking, it is necessary that some one should tell you stories and sing you songs."

"That's very true," replied Castor, "and Antonio knows many beautiful stories, and sings many pretty songs."

"But when Antonio does not sing songs or tell stories," continued the Malay, "what happens then? Why, every one sleeps, for all are fatigued with their week's labours. Then there is no more berloque; you, Castor, no longer make your bamboo chairs; you, Bonhomme, manufacture no more wooden spoons; you, Toukal, let your pipe go out; and as for you, Cambeba, you let your bananas burn in the ashes; is not this true?"

"It is true," replied, in chorus, not only those individuals addressed by name, but the entire troop of slaves, with the exception of Nazim, who continued to maintain a disdainful silence.

"In that case, then, you ought to be grateful to him who tells you pretty stories to keep you awake, and who sings you jolly songs to make you laugh."

"Thanks! Antonio—thanks!" cried every voice.

"Besides Antonio, who is there able to tell you stories?"

"Laiza—Laiza also knows many very beautiful tales."

"Yes, but tales that make you shudder."

"It is true," replied the negroes.

"And, besides Antonio, who can sing you songs?"

"Nazim! Nazim also knows some beautiful songs."

"Yes, but songs that make you weep."

"That is very true," again replied the negroes.

"There are none then but Antonio who know songs and stories which make you laugh?"

"And that's true enough, too," responded the negroes.

"And who was it that sang you a song but four days ago?"

"You, Malay."

"Who was it that told you a tale but three days ago?"

"You, Malay."

"Who sang you a song the day before yesterday?"

"You, Malay."

"And told you a pretty story yesterday?"

"You, Malay."

"And who, even this very day, has already sung you a song, and is going to tell you a tale by-and-by?"

"You, Malay—none but you."

"In that case, then, if it is I who am the cause of your being amused when working, of your having more pleasure in smoking, and of your not falling asleep while cooking your banana, it is but just that I who can do nothing since I sacrifice all my time to you, should receive something from you for my trouble."

The justice of this observation struck every one; nevertheless, our veracity as an historian compels us to confess that a few voices only, belonging to the most candid of the company, replied in the affirmative.

"Consequently," continued Antonio, "it is but right that Toukal should give me a little tobacco to smoke in my *gourgouri*, is it not, Cambeba?"

"Perfectly right," exclaimed Cambeba, enchanted at the idea of this impost being levied upon another in place of himself.

And Toukal was compelled to share his tobacco with Antonio.

"Now," continued Antonio, "I lost my wooden spoon the other day, and I have no money to buy another, because, in place of working, I have sung you songs and told you stories; it is but fair then that Bonhomme should give me a wooden spoon, to eat my soup with. Is it not, Toukal?"

"Perfectly fair," cried Toukal, delighted to find that he was not the only one of the party taxed by Antonio.

And Antonio stretched out his hand towards Bonhomme, who reluctantly handed him over a spoon which he had just finished.

"Now," resumed Antonio, "I have got some tobacco to put into my gourgouri, and I have a spoon to eat my soup with, but I have no money in my pocket to purchase meat for my broth. It is but fair, therefore, that Castor should give me the little stool he is working at, in order that I may go and sell it in the market and buy a piece of beef. I appeal to you, Toukal, Bonhomme, Cambeba?"

"Yes, yes, perfectly fair!" cried Toukal, Bonhomme, and Cambeba, with one voice; "perfectly fair!"

And Antonio, half with good will, half by force, drew from the hands of Castor the little stool, of which he had just nailed down the last bamboo.

"Now," continued Antonio, "I have sung a song which has fatigued me, and I am about to tell a story which will fatigue me still more. It is but right that I should eat something to keep up my strength: is it not, Toukal, Bonhomme, Castor?"

"Quite right," replied the three contributors in a breath.

A horrid suspicion darted through Cambeba's mind.

"But," said Antonio, displaying a double row of teeth, large and white as those of a wolf, "but I have nothing to put into my little mouth."

Cambeba felt his hair bristling with terror, and mechanically he stretched out his hand towards the fire.

"It is therefore but fair," resumed Antonio, "that Cambeba should give me a little banana; is it not, all of you?"

"Yes, yes, it is but fair," cried at the same Toukal, Bonhomme, and Castor. "Yes, it is but fair; banana, Cambeba!—banana, Cambeba!" and every voice replied in chorus: "Banana, Cambeba!"

The unfortunate Cambeba gazed at the assembly with a terrified air, and rushed towards the hearth to rescue his banana, but Antonio stopped him on his way, and, with one hand holding him with a strength of which one would not have imagined him capable, he seized with the other the cord used for hoisting up the sacks of maize into the loft, passed the hook into the waistbelt of Cambeba, making at the same time a signal to Toukal to haul the other end of the cord. With a quickness which did the greatest honour to his intelligence, Toukal comprehended the sign, and, at the moment when he the least expected it, Cambeba found himself raised from the earth, and to the great hilarity of the assembled company, he began to ascend towards the roof, revolving slowly as he rose. At about ten feet from the ground the ascension stopped, and Cambeba remained suspended above the heads of all, still stretching forth his hands towards the unfortunate banana, the possession of which he had no longer any means of disputing with his enemy.

"Bravo, Antonio; bravo, Antonio!" cried all the negroes, holding their sides with laughter, whilst Antonio, now perfectly master of the article in dispute, delicately put aside the ashes, and drew from them the smoking banana, done to a turn, and browned in a manner sufficient to make an epicure's mouth water.

"My banana, my banana!" cried Cambeba, with an accent of the deepest despair.

"There it is," said Antonio, stretching out his arm in the direction of Cambeba.

"Me too far to takee he."

"You don't want it, eh?"

"Me no able to takee he up here."

"In that case," replied Anton'o, parodying the accent of his unfortunate suspended enemy, "in that case me will yam he here, that he no be lost."

And Antonio set to work to peel the banana, with so comical an air that the shouts of laughter became convulsive.

"Antonio," cried Cambeba, "Antonio, give me banana, pray give me banana; banana no fu me, banana fu poor wifey, who sick and no able to nyam nothing else. Me have thieved he, so me wantee he."

"Stolen goods never profit the thief," replied Antonio, philosophically, still continuing to peel the banana as he spoke.

"Ah, poor Narina, poor Narina; no habee noting to nyam and so hungry."

"Come, have compassion on this unfortunate," said the young negro of Anjoan, who amid the general merriment had alone remained grave and melancholy.

"Not such an ass," said Antonio.

"I spoke not to you," replied Nazim.

"And to whom do you speak, then?"

"I speak to men."

"Well, I speak to you," rejoined Antonio, "and I say to you: 'Be quiet, Nazim.'"

"Lower down Cambeba," continued the young negro, in a tone of commanding dignity which would have done honour to a king.

Toukal, who held the rope, turned towards Antonio, as if uncertain whom to obey; but, without replying to this mute interrogation:—

"I said to you: 'Be quiet, Nazim,' and you have not held your tongue," repeated the Malay.

"When a cur yelps at my heels, I reply not to him, but continue my way. You are a cur, Antonio."

"Take care of yourself, Nazim," said Antonio, shaking his head; "when your brother Lalza is not here you are

not capable of much, therefore I am very sure you will not repeat what you have just said."

"You are a dog, Antonio," repeated Nazim, rising from the ground.

All the negroes who were between Nazim and Antonio broke away on either side, so that the handsome negro of Anjoan, and the hideous Malay, now found themselves face to face, although at ten paces' distance from each other.

"You said that at a safe distance, Nazim," replied Antonio, grinding his teeth together with passion.

"And I repeat it nearer," cried Nazim. And with one bound, he cleared the intervening space, and stood within two paces of Antonio. Then, with disdainful voice, haughty glance, and expanded nostril, he repeated, for the third time—"You are a dog."

A white man, under these circumstances, would have flung himself upon his enemy, and have stifled him in his arms, had that been possible. Antonio, on the contrary, retreated a few paces, cowered down upon his long limbs, and gathered himself together like a reptile about to dart upon its prey, while, with a movement almost imperceptible, he drew a knife from his pocket, and opened it.

Nazim saw the movement, and divined the intention; but without deigning to make a single gesture of defence, erect, mute, and motionless, he awaited, like a Nubian Deity, the attack of his enemy.

The Malay glared for a moment on his enemy with a vindictive scowl, then springing up with the suppleness and agility of a serpent—"Woe to you," cried he, "Lalza is not here!"

"Lalza is here," said a grave voice.

He who pronounced these words, had uttered them in his habitual tone of voice; he had not added a single gesture, nor accompanied them with any sign whatsoever, and yet, at the sound of this voice, Antonio stopped short, and his knife, which was but two inches from Nazim's breast, escaped from his hand.

"Laiza!" cried all the negroes, turning towards the new comer, and at the same instant assuming an attitude of obedience.

He who had but to pronounce three words, in order to produce so powerful an impression upon the assembled negroes, and even upon Antonio, was a man in the prime of life, of the middle height, but whose muscular and vigorous limbs announced a degree of strength absolutely gigantic. He stood erect and motionless, his arms crossed over his chest, while from his eyes, half closed like those of a ruminating lion, there darted a calm and imperious though brilliant glance. At the sight of all these men, awaiting thus in respectful silence a word or sign from this individual, one might have compared them to an African horde, awaiting peace or war at the nod or beck of their king; and yet he was but a slave among slaves.

After some moments passed in this attitude of statue-like immobility, Laiza slowly raised his arm, and stretched it towards Cambeba, who during all this time had remained suspended by his cord, hovering, mute and motionless like the others, above the scene which was passing. At this signal, Toukal let the cord run through his hands, and Cambeba, to his great satisfaction, found himself once more upon mother earth. His first care was to commence a search for his banana, but in the confusion which had naturally followed the scene we have just described, the banana had disappeared.

During this search, Laiza had left the *hangar*, but almost immediately afterwards he returned, bearing upon his shoulders a wild hog, which he threw down near the hearth.

"Look here, children," said he, "I have thought of you; take and divide."

This action, and the liberal words which accompanied it, touched the two most sensitive cords of the negro heart, gluttony and enthusiasm, and too deeply not to produce their effect. All surrounded the animal, each admiring it in his own way.

"Oh! what a nice supper we shall have to-night," said a Malabar.

"He black as a Mozambique," said a Malgache.

"He fat as a Malgache," said a Mozambique.

But, as it may be easily supposed, admiration was a sentiment by far too ideal, not to give place very shortly to one much more positive. In the twinkling of an eye, the animal was cut up, a portion laid on one side for the following day, and the remainder cut in slices sufficiently slender to be laid upon the coals, and in more solid joints which were destined to be roasted before the fire.

Then, each resumed his former place, but with a more joyous countenance, for each was enjoying the anticipation of a good supper. Cambeba alone remained standing aloof from the rest, sad and isolated, in a corner of the apartment.

"What are you doing, Cambeba?" demanded Laïza.

"Me do noting at all, papa Laïza," replied Cambeba, sadly.

Papa is, as every one knows, a title of honour among the negroes; and all the slaves on the estate, from the youngest to the most aged, had, by general consent, conferred this title on Laïza.

"Is it because you are still suffering from being hung up by the waist?" demanded the negro.

"Oh! no, papa, me no so soft as that either."

"Then, you are unhappy, are you not?"

This time Cambeba replied only by nodding his head several times, in sign of affirmation.

"And why are you sorrowful?" demanded Laïza.

"Antonio taked my banana, that me hab to thief for wifey who sick, and me hab noting to gib she now— noting at all."

"Well, then, give her a piece of this wild hog."

"She no able for nyam butcher's meat. No, she no able, papa Laïza."

"Hola!" exclaimed Laïza, in a loud voice, "which of you here has a banana to give me?"

A dozen of bananas appeared, as if by magic, from beneath the ashes. Laïza chose the finest, and gave it to

Cambeba, who ran off with his prize, without even taking time to thank his benefactor; then turning towards Bonhomme, to whom the fruit belonged, Laïza continued:—

“You shall lose nothing, Bonhomme, by this,” said he, “for, in place of the banana, you shall have Antonio’s share of the meat.”

“And pray, what shall I have, then?” said Antonio, saucily.

“You!” replied Laïza; “you may keep the banana you stole from Cambeba.”

“But it is lost,” replied the Malay.

“That is nothing to me,” said Laïza.

“Bravo!” exclaimed the negroes; “stolen goods never profit the thief.”

The Malay rose, cast a sidelong glance upon those men who had, but a few moments before, applauded his tyranny, but were now just as ready to applaud his chastisement, and without uttering a word left the *hangar*.

“Brother,” said Nazim to Laïza, “take care of yourself; I know him well, he will play you some evil trick.”

“Rather watch over yourself, Nazim, for he would not dare to attack me.”

“Well then, I shall watch over you, and you shall watch over me. But this is not the subject to be discussed now, and we have, as you know, something else to speak of.”

“Yes, but not here.”

“Let us leave this, then.”

“Just now; when they are all occupied with their supper, no one will pay attention to us.”

“You are in the right, brother.”

And the two negroes began to converse together, in a loud voice, on different subjects; but as the collops of pork were now broiled, and the joints of meat roasted, profiting by the general preoccupation which ever presides over the first portion of a repast seasoned with a good appetite, they both left the barn in turn, without in fact, as Laïza had foreseen, the remainder of the company even seeming to notice their disappearance.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TOILET OF THE RUNAWAY SLAVE.

It was now almost ten o'clock; the night, although there was no moon, was beautiful and starry, as tropical nights are in general towards the end of summer. In the heavens could be perceived a few of those constellations which are familiar to us from our infancy under the names of the Little Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, but in positions so different from those in which we are accustomed to see them, that Europeans would have recognised them with difficulty; in exchange, however, in the midst of them shone the Southern Cross, invisible in our northern hemisphere. The silence of the night was disturbed only by the sound of the numerous tan-recks, which abound in the quarters of the Black River, gnawing the bark of the trees, the songs of the blue figuiers and the foudijalas, those larks and nightingales of Madagascar, and the almost imperceptible sound produced by the already withered grass, as it crackled beneath the pressure of the brothers' footsteps.

The two negroes proceeded onward in silence, glancing from time to time around them, with an anxious and watchful air, pausing at times to listen, and then resuming their way. At length, having reached a more densely wooded and sequestered spot, they entered a sort of grove of bamboos, and penetrating to the centre of it, they again stopped and looked around them in silence, listening attentively. Doubtless the result of this last investigation was still more satisfactory than the others, for they exchanged a mutual glance of security, and seated themselves together at the foot of a wild banana-tree, which stretched its huge leaves, like a gigantic fan, above the slender foliage of the rose-trees by which it was surrounded.

"Well, brother?" demanded Nazim first, with that

evident appearance of impatience which Laïza had already moderated, when the former sought to question him among the other negroes.

"Then you still maintain the same resolution, Nazim?" replied Laïza.

"More strongly than ever, brother; I should die here. Look you, I have condescended to work until now—I, Laïza, the son of a chief—I, thy brother!—but I am tired of this wretched life; I must return to Anjoan or else I shall die."

Laïza sighed.

"It is far from here to Anjoan," said he.

"What matters it?" replied Nazim.

"It is the hurricane season."

"The wind will impel me all the faster."

"But should the boat founder?"

"We shall swim as long as we have strength left, then when we shall be able to swim no longer, we will take one last look at that heaven where the Great Spirit awaits us, and sink into the waters, locked in each other's arms."

"Alas!" said Laïza.

"Better that, than to remain a slave," said Nazim.

"So you wish to quit the Isle of France?"

"I do."

"At the risk of your life?"

"At the risk of my life."

"There are ten chances to one against your ever reaching Anjoan."

"There is still one chance out of ten that I do reach it."

"'Tis well," said Laïza; "be it even as you wish, brother. But yet, reflect once more."

"Brother," replied Nazim, "I have reflected for two long years. When the chief of the Mongaloes took me, in my turn, prisoner, in a skirmish, even as you yourself had been captured four years previously, and sold me to the slaver-captain, as you also had been sold, **at that moment formed my resolution. I was chained—**

I endeavoured to strangle myself with my irons. They fastened me down in the ship's hold—I sought to dash my brains out against the vessel's side. They placed straw beneath my head, and then I determined to allow myself to perish with hunger. They forced open my mouth, and, unable to make me eat, they obliged me to drink. They saw that they must sell me quickly; they landed me here and sold me at half price, and yet that was even too high, for I was resolved to dash myself from the first mountain that I should climb. But all at once I heard thy voice, O my brother! all at once I felt thy heart beat against my heart, I felt thy lips pressed against my own, and from that moment I felt so happy that I even fancied I could still live! That lasted for a year. Then, pardon me, O my brother! thy friendship no longer sufficed to fill the aching void which I experienced within my heart. I recalled to mind our isle, I recalled to mind our father and Zirna. Our labours appeared to me at first heavy, then humiliating, and at last insupportable. Then I said to myself, "I will fly, I will return, and once more behold Zirna and my father, once more behold our isle."—And you, you have been ever good, ever kind to me, you said to me, 'Rest, Nazim, rest, you who are feeble, and I shall labour for you, I who am strong and active.' And you have gone out every evening for the last four days, and laboured while I reposed. Is it not so, Laïza?"

"Yes, Nazim; but listen to me for one moment," continued Laïza, proudly erecting his head, "Better far for you to wait a little longer. To-day, slaves—in a month—in three months—in a year, perhaps—masters!"

"Yes," said Nazim, "yes, I know thy prospects, I know thy hopes."

"Then, can you not picture to yourself," resumed Laïza, "what it would be to see these whites, so proud and so cruel, humiliated, and suppliants in their turn? Can you not comprehend what a triumph it would be to make them, in their turn, work twelve hours a day? To beat them, to lash them with their own whips, to

break them under the batons? They are but twelve thousand, and we eighty thousand, and the day on which we shall rise, that day they are lost!"

"I will reply to you as you did to me, Laïza, there are ten chances to one against your succeeding."

"And I will answer you as you did me, Nazim; there is one chance out of ten in my favour. Remain, then—"

"I cannot, Laïza, I cannot—I have seen my mother's spirit; she bade me return to my country."

"You have seen her?" said Laïza.

"Yes, every evening for the last fifteen days, a foudi-jala has perched above my head; it is the same which sung at Anjoan upon her tomb. It has crossed the sea with its little wings, and has come to visit me; I recognise its song—listen—it comes again."

And in fact, at that moment, a Madagascar nightingale, perched upon the topmost bough of the clump of trees beneath which the brothers were reclining, commenced its melodious song above their heads. Both listened, their heads bowed down in an attitude of pensive attention, until the nocturnal musician, suddenly breaking off in its song, winged its flight in the direction of their native land, and again commenced its warblings at about fifty paces' distance; then, flying still farther off in the same direction, it repeated once more and for the last time, its song—the far-off echo of their fatherland!—but of which, at that distance, the listeners could scarcely catch the highest notes. Then at length it flew again, but this time so very far, that the two exiles listened in vain—its song was heard no more.

"It has returned to Anjoan," said Nazim; "but it will come back again to call me, and point out to me the way, until I myself return."

"Go then, my brother," said Laïza.

"Thus?" demanded Nazim.

"All is ready. In one of the most solitary spots on the banks of the Black River, opposite the mountain, I have chosen one of the largest trees that I was able to

find; I have hollowed out a canoe from its trunk, and have shaped two oars from its branches; I have sawn above and beneath the canoe, but have left it standing, fearing lest the top should be missed among the other tree tops. It now requires but a push to lay it prostrate upon the ground; you have but to drag the canoe to the river, and let it float down the stream; and since you desire to go, Nazim, this very night you shall depart."

"But you, brother, will you not come with me?" demanded Nazim.

"No," replied Laïza, "I will remain."

Nazim, in his turn, heaved a profound sigh.

"And what prevents you, then," demanded Nazim, after a moment's silence, "from returning with me to the land of our fathers."

"I have already told you, Nazim, what prevents me: for more than a year back, we have determined to revolt, and our friends have chosen me to head the insurrection. I cannot betray our friends by quitting them."

"It is not that which detains you," said Nazim, shaking his head; "there is another inducement still."

"And what else then, think you, can detain me, Nazim?"

"The rose of the Black River," replied the young man, looking steadfastly at his brother.

Laïza started; then after a moment's silence:—

"'Tis true," said he; "I love her."

"My poor brother!" murmured Nazim; "and what are your projects?"

"I have none."

"What are your hopes?"

"To see her to-morrow, as I saw her yesterday, as I have seen her to-day."

"But does she even know of your existence?"

"I doubt it."

"Has she ever spoken to you?"

"Never."

"Then, our country?"

"I have forgotten it."

"Nessali?"

"I no longer remember her."

"Our father?"

Laiza let his head fall between his hands; then after a moment's silence:—

"Listen to me," said he to his brother; "all that you could say to induce me to fly, would be as useless as all I have said to you to urge you to remain. She is family—country—all to me! to see her is as necessary to my existence as to breathe the air that she breathes. Let us then each follow his destiny. Return to Anjoan, Nazim; I shall remain here."

"But what shall I reply to my father, when he asks me why Laiza did not return with me?"

"You must tell him that Laiza is no more," replied the negro, in a stifled voice.

"He will not believe me," said Nazim, shaking his head.

"And why not?"

"He will say to me: 'If my son were dead, I should have seen his spirit; but the soul of Laiza has not visited his father, therefore Laiza is not dead.'"

"Well, you must tell him that I love a young girl of the white men," said Laiza, "and he will curse me. But to quit this isle as long as she is here—never—never!"

"The Great Spirit will assist me, brother," said Nazim, rising; "lead me to the spot where you have hollowed out the canoe."

"One moment," said Laiza. And the negro advanced towards the hollow trunk of a maple-tree, and drew from it a fragment of glass, and a gargoulette filled with cocoanut oil.

"What is that for?" demanded Nazim.

"Listen, brother," said Laiza; "it is possible that by the aid of a good breeze and your oars, you may, in eight or ten days, reach Madagascar or even the mainland. But it is also possible, that, either to-morrow or the day after, a sudden squall may drive you back upon

this coast. Then your flight will be discovered, your description will be spread over the entire isle, and you will be obliged to play the runaway, and fly from rock to rock, and from wood to wood."

"Brother," said Nazim, "I am called the stag of Anjoan, even as you are styled the lion."

"Yes, but like the stag you might fall into a snare. It is of consequence, therefore, that they should be unable to hold you; it is necessary that you should be able to glide between their hands. Here is glass wherewith to cut your hair, and oil to anoint your limbs. Come, brother, let me perform for you the toilet of the runaway slave."

The two brothers gained an open space in the wood, and there, by the starlight, Laïza commenced cutting his brother's hair, an operation which he performed with the fragment of a broken bottle, as quickly and as skilfully as a barber could have done it with the best razor in the world. Then, this operation finished, Nazim threw off his *laugouti*, and his brother poured upon his shoulders a portion of the cocoa-nut oil contained in the gourd, which the young man distributed with his hand over all parts of his body. Thus anointed from head to foot, the handsome Anjoan negro seemed like an antique *athlète* preparing himself for the combat.

But it required a proof to tranquillize Laïza's mind. Laïza, like Alcidas, could have stopped a horse by the hind legs, and the animal would have vainly sought to escape from his hands. Like Milo of Crotona, Laïza could have seized a bull by the horns, and raised it upon his shoulders, or have beaten it down beneath his feet. If Nazim could escape from his hands, Nazim could elude the grasp of every one. Laïza seized his brother by the arm, contracting his fingers with all the strength of his iron muscles. Nazim drew his arm towards him, and it slipped between his brother's fingers, as an eel in the hand of the fisherman. He then seized Nazim in his arms, pressing him against his breast, as Hercules did Antæus. Nazim placed his arms upon his brother's shoulders, and glided from his embrace, as would a ser-

pent between the claws of a lion. Then only was the negro satisfied. Nazim could not possibly be taken by surprise, and, in a trial of speed, he would have outrun the animal whose designation he bore.

After this, Laïza presented to his brother the gourd, still three fourths full of cocoa-nut oil, recommending him to preserve it even more carefully than the roots of manioc which were to appease his hunger, or the water which was to quench his thirst. Nazim attached the gourd to a strong cord which he fastened to his waist-belt.

The two brothers then interrogated the heavens, and seeing, by the position of the stars, that it must be at least midnight, they took the road which led towards the Hill of the Black River, and ere long disappeared from sight beneath the shadows of the woods which clothe the base of the Trois-Mamelles; but behind them, and at about twenty paces distant from the clump of bamboos under which the conversation which we have just related had taken place, a man who until then, by his immobility, might have been taken for a trunk of one of the trees among which he had lain hidden, now slowly rose, glided like a shadow into the underwood, appeared for a instant on the skirts of the forest, and pursuing the brothers with a threatening gesture, darted off, as soon as they had disappeared from his view, in the direction of Port Louis.

This man was Antonio, the Malay, who had sworn to be revenged upon Laïza and Nazim, and who was now about to keep his oath.

And now, quickly as his long limbs are carrying him towards his destination, it is necessary, with our reader's permission, that we should precede him to the capital of the Isle of France.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BAY OF THE BLACK RIVER.

AFTER having paid Miko-Miko for the Chinese fan, of which to her great astonishment George had told her the price, the young girl of whom we have already caught a momentary glimpse while standing upon the threshold of her dwelling had, whilst the negro slave assisted the merchant in the re-packing of his scattered wares, re-entered the house, still followed by her governess, and quite elated with her acquisition of the day, which, in all probability, was destined to be forgotten on the morrow. She threw herself, with that easy and graceful carriage which gives such a peculiar charm to the creole women, languidly upon a large couch, which was evidently intended for a bed as well as a sofa. This piece of furniture was placed at the further end of a charming little boudoir, filled with rare and costly Chinese porcelain, and vases from Japan. The tapestry which covered the walls was formed of that beautiful Indian fabric which the inhabitants of the Isle of France import from the Coromandel coast, and which goes by the name of *patna*. According to the custom in warm latitudes, the chairs and fauteuils were made of cane, and the two windows which were placed opposite to each other, and which opened, one upon a court thickly planted with trees, the other upon a vast timber basin, admitted, through the bamboo mats which served as jalousies, the fresh sea-breeze, and the perfume of flowers.

Scarcely had the young beauty stretched herself upon her couch, when a little green and grey paroquet, plump as a partridge, flew from his perch, and alighting on her shoulder began to pick at the end of the fan, which his mistress, by a movement apparently quite mechanical, amused herself by alternately opening and shutting. We say by a motion perfectly mechanical, because it

was evident that it was not on her fan, charming as it was, and desirous as she had been to purchase it, that the young girl's thoughts were at this moment fixed. In fact, her eyes, to all appearance fastened upon a point in the room where no remarkable object seemed to attract her gaze, had evidently ceased to behold present objects, and were following some dream of the imagination. Moreover, this day-dream, beyond all doubt, possessed for her all the semblance of reality, for, from time to time, a slight smile would pass across her features, and her lips would move, as if replying in mute language to some as mute recollection. This preoccupation was too foreign to the young girl's usual habits, to escape long the eyes of her governess; accordingly, having gazed for a few moments in silence on the play of features observable in her young pupil, the latter at length spoke.

"What is the matter with you to-day, my dear Sara?" demanded Henriette.

"With me! nothing;" replied the young girl, starting like a person suddenly roused from a sound sleep. "I was playing, as you see, with my paroquet and my fan—that is all."

"Yes, yes, I can see very well that you were playing with your paroquet and your fan; but most certainly when I disturbed you from your reverie, you were thinking of neither the one nor the other."

"Oh! ma mie Henriette, I assure you—"

"You are not in the habit of telling falsehoods, Sara, and above all to me," interrupted the governess; "why begin to-day?"

The cheeks of the young beauty were crimsoned with a deep blush; then after a moment's hesitation:—

"You are right, *chère bonne*," said she; "I was thinking of something very different."

"And of what were you thinking?"

"I was just wondering who that young man could be, who passed by so opportunely to relieve us from our embarrassment. I have never observed him before to-day, and most probably he has come in the same ship

that brought the governor. Is there any harm then in thinking of this young man?"

"No, my child, there is no harm in thinking of him; but it would have been a falsehood to tell me that you were thinking of something else."

"I was wrong," said the young girl; "forgive me."

And she raised her charming face towards her governess, who leaned forward and kissed her pupil on the forehead.

Both now remained silent for a few moments; but as *ma mie* Henriette, according to English morality, was unwilling to allow the ardent imagination of her fair pupil to dwell too long upon the recollection of a young man, and as Sara, on her side, felt a certain degree of embarrassment in keeping silent, both opened their lips, at the same moment, to turn the conversation to another subject. But their first words clashed in some degree, and each having paused to let the other speak, there resulted from this too hasty conflict of words another momentary silence. This time it was Sara who broke it:—

"What were you going to say, *ma mie* Henriette?" asked the young girl.

"But were you not about to say something, yourself, Sara? What was it?"

"Oh! I was merely saying, that I should like very much to know if our new Governor-general is a young man."

"And if so, you would be very glad of it, would you not, Sara?"

"Certainly. For if he is a young man, he will give dinners, fêtes, and balls; and that will enliven our poor, dull, unfortunate Port Louis a little. But, oh! balls above all! if he would but give balls!"

"You are very fond of dancing, then, my dear child?"

"Oh! I do so love it," exclaimed the young girl.

Henriette smiled.

"Is there any harm, then, in being fond of dancing?" asked Sara.

"There is harm, Sara, in liking everything, as you do, passionately."

"What would you have, *chère bonne*?" said Sara, with that charming little coaxing air which she knew so well how to assume on certain occasions. "It is my nature: I love or I hate, and I can neither hide my hatred nor my love. Have you not repeatedly told me that there was no fault so mean and contemptible as dissimulation?"

"Certainly I have; but between dissembling our sensations, and abandoning ourselves unceasingly to our desires, or I might almost say instincts, there is a vast difference," replied the grave Englishwoman, whom the superficial and brilliant reasonings of her pupil embarrassed almost as much as the wild outbreaks of her primitive nature disquieted her at other moments.

"Yes; I know that you have often told me that, *ma mie* Henriette. I am aware that the European women, those at least who move in fashionable life, have discovered an admirable middle course between frankness and dissimulation, in the silence of the voice, and the immobility of the features. But with me, *chère bonne*, you must not be too exacting. I am not a civilized woman, I am a little savage, brought up in the midst of wild forests, and on the banks of mighty rivers. If what I see pleases me, I desire it, and if I desire it, I will have it. Then, you see, every one has spoiled me a little, *ma mie* Henriette, and you among the rest. That has made me wilful. When I ask for anything, I almost always get it, and if by chance I am ever refused, I have taken it, and have always been pardoned."

"And how will all that be arranged, when, with this amiable character, you are the wife of M. Henri?"

"Oh! Henri is a good-natured fellow, and we have settled all that between us already," said Sara, with the most perfect innocence. "I am to let him do what he pleases, and, on his side, he will let me please myself in everything. Is it not so, Henri?" continued Sara, turning towards the door, which at that moment opened to give entrance to M. de Malmédie and his son.

"What is it, my dear Sara?" inquired the young man, approaching the young beauty, and gallantly kissing her hand.

"Have we not agreed, that when we shall be married, you are never to contradict me, and that you are to give me everything I fancy?"

"Peste!" said M. de Malmédie; "here is a little wife making conditions beforehand."

"And did you not say," continued Sara, "that if I still continued to be fond of balls, you would take me to as many as I pleased, and let me stay as long as I liked?—not like those disagreeable, cross husbands, who go away after the seventh or eighth quadrille. And did you not say, too, that I might fish, hunt, or idle, as long and as often as I liked? And did you not say, that if I took a fancy for a pretty French bonnet, or a beautiful India shawl, or a handsome English or Arabian horse, you would purchase it for me?"

"Oh! yes, certainly," said Henri, with a smile.—"But, by-the-bye, talking of Arab horses, we saw a pair of beautiful ones to-day; and I am just as well pleased, Sara, that you did not see them, for as, in all probability, they are not for sale, if you had chanced to admire them, I fear it would not have been in my power to gratify you."

"I saw them also," said Sara; "did they not belong to a dark young man about twenty-five years of age, a foreigner with beautiful hair and superb black eyes?"

"Why, Sara," exclaimed Henri, "it would appear that you paid more attention to the cavalier than to his horses."

"That is easily explained, Henri; the cavalier approached me and spoke to me, whilst I only saw the horses at a distance, and they did not even neigh."

"What! this young coxcomb has spoken to you, Sara? and on what pretence, may I ask?" rejoined Henri.

"Yes, on what pretence?" echoed M. de Malmédie.

"In the first place," replied Sara, "I did not perceive anything in the least approaching the coxcomb about

him, and here is *ma mie* Henriette who was with me, and who is of the same opinion. But you ask me on what pretence did he speak to me? Oh, nothing more simple: I was returning from church, when I found, waiting for me at the door, a Chinese, with his two baskets full of trinkets, fans, pocket-books, and all sorts of things besides. I asked him the price of this fan—Look, Henri, is it not a pretty one?"

"Well, what then?" demanded M. de Malmédie; all this does not explain how this young man came to speak to you.

"I am coming to that, uncle, I am just coming to that," replied Sara. "I asked him the price then; but here was the difficulty, the good man only spoke Chinese. We were therefore very much embarrassed, *ma mie* Henriette and myself, and asked those who had gathered round us to see the pretty things which the merchant had spread out, if there was not one among them who could serve as interpreter, when the young man advanced, and placing his services at our disposal, spoke to the merchant in his own language, and turning round to us said: 'Eighty piastres.' That was not dear, was it, uncle?"

"Hum!" said M. de Malmédie; "that was just the market price of a negro, before the English suppressed the traffic."

"So this gentleman speaks Chinese, then?" asked Henri, with astonishment.

"Yes," replied Sara.

"Oh! father, what do you think?" cried Henri, with a burst of laughter; "do you hear? He speaks Chinese."

"Well, what is there so very laughable in that?" inquired Sara.

"Oh! nothing at all, nothing at all," replied Henri, continuing to abandon himself to his hilarity, "on the contrary, it is a charming accomplishment which the illustrious stranger possesses. He is a very happy man: he can converse with tea-caddies and fire-screens."

"The fact is, that Chinese is by no means a universal language," chimed in M. de Malmedie.

"He is some mandarin," said Henri, continuing to indulge his mirth at the expense of the young stranger, whose haughty glance still rankled in his breast.

"At any rate," replied Sara, "he is a very literary mandarin; for after speaking Chinese to the pedlar, he spoke French to me and English to ma mie Henriette."

"The deuce he did!" exclaimed M. de Malmedie; "why the fellow speaks all languages. I want just such a man in my counting-house."

"Unfortunately, uncle," said Sara, he of whom you speak, appears to have been in a service which must have disgusted him with all others."

"And what service is that?"

"In that of the King of France. Did you not remark at his button-hole the ribbon of the Legion of Honour, and another ribbon besides?"

"Oh! now-a-days, people receive these orders who have never been in the service: that is by no means a necessary condition."

"But still, in general, the individual so honoured must have been distinguished," rejoined Sara, piqued without exactly knowing why, and defending the stranger from that instinct, so natural to simple hearts, which prompts them to defend those who are accused unjustly.

"Well," said Henri, "probably he has been decorated because he knew Chinese; that is all."

"At all events we shall know all about him by-and-by," rejoined M. de Malmedie, in a tone which proved that he had not perceived the pique which had taken place between the two young people; "for he came in the governor's ship, and as people do not come to the Isle of France to depart the following day, we shall doubtless have the pleasure of his society for some time to come."

At this moment a domestic entered, bearing a letter sealed with the Government arms, which had just

been sent by Lord William Murray. It was an invitation for M. de Malmedie, Henri, and Sara, to the dinner which was to take place on the following Monday, and to the ball which was to succeed it.

Sara's conflicting hopes and fears respecting the new governor were now set at rest. He who thus entered upon his functions with a dinner and ball, must be a gallant man, and Sara uttered a cry of joy at the idea of passing an entire night in dancing, especially as the last ship from France had brought her some charming dresses, which had not given her half the pleasure they would have done, had she but known how soon an opportunity would be afforded her for their display.

To Henri this news, despite the dignity with which he received it, was not altogether indifferent. Henri considered himself, and with truth, as one of the handsomest young men in the colony, and although his marriage with his cousin had long since been determined on, and the young couple were considered as mutually betrothed, he did not hesitate until the event should take place to flirt with other women, especially as Sara, whether from indifference or habit, never manifested the slightest jealousy in this respect.

As to M. de Malmedie senior, he appeared to have added two inches to his stature at the sight of this letter, which he read over three times, and which gave him a still higher idea of his importance, since two or three hours had scarcely elapsed from the governor's arrival, before he had received an invitation to dine with him, an honour which was in all probability conferred only on the most considerable personages of the island.

However some change was now necessary in the arrangements of the Malmedie family. Henri had arranged a grand stag-hunt for the following Sunday and Monday, in the quarter of the savanna which, being at that time uncultivated, abounded with game of every description; and, as it was over a portion of his father's estates that the hunt was to take place, he had invited about a dozen of his friends to meet on Sunday morning,

at a charming country house which he possessed on the banks of the Black River, one of the most picturesque quarters of the island. As it was now impossible to adhere to this arrangement, since one of the days fixed on was that on which the governor's dinner and ball were to take place, it became necessary to ante-date the party by four and twenty hours, not only for the Messieurs Malmedie, but also for the convenience of those who were likewise invited to Lord William's dinner. Henri accordingly proceeded to his own apartment to scribble a dozen notes, which the negro Bijou was charged to carry to their respective addresses, and which announced to the sportsmen the modification made on their original plan.

M. de Malmedie in his turn now took leave of Sara for the present, alleging as an excuse some business to be attended to, but in reality to announce to his neighbours, that in the course of three days he would be able to give them his frank opinion respecting their new governor, since on the following Monday he was invited to dine with him.

As for Sara, she declared that under circumstances so important and unexpected, she had too many preparations to make to be able to start with these gentlemen on Saturday morning, and that she would content herself with joining them on Saturday evening, or early on Sunday.

The remainder of that day and the whole of the following one were passed as Sara had foreseen in preparations for this important evening; and thanks to the calm which habitually presided over all Mademoiselle Henriette's arrangements, Sara was able to set out on the Sunday morning, as she had promised her uncle. The important part of the business was over, the dress had been tried on, and the dress-maker, a woman of character, had answered for it being finished on the following morning; so, should any alterations be required, there still remained the whole of the day to complete them.

Sara therefore left the capital in a mood as joyous as it was possible for her to be. Next to a ball, what she loved best in the world was the country; as the country offered her that perfect freedom to choose either calm and tranquil repose or rapid motion, which a mind prone to extremes seldom or never meets with in the city. When in the country therefore Sara ceased to recognise any authority, even that of *ma mie* Henriette, the person who after all exercised the most influence over her. Did she feel inclined to indolence, she would choose out some sweet spot, and there, couched beneath a verdant canopy of jameroses and paniplemousses, she would live the life of the flowers; inhaling through every pore the dew, the air, and the glowing sunlight; listening to the singing of the blue figuiers and the *fondi-jalas*; amusing herself by watching the gambols of the monkeys, as they sprang from branch to branch, or suspended themselves from the boughs by their tails; following with her eyes the graceful and rapid motions of those pretty green and gold lizards, so common in the Isle of France, and which literally start up in every direction from under the pedestrian's feet: and there would she remain for entire hours, placing herself as it were in communication with Nature, whose thousand murmurs she would listen to, whose thousand aspects she would study, whose thousand harmonies she would compare. Was her mind, on the contrary, inclined to activity, then she was no longer a young maiden; she was a gazelle, a bird, a butterfly; she would cross torrents, in pursuit of the ruby-headed libellules; she would lean over precipices to gather the *songes*, in whose large leaves the drops of dew hang trembling like globules of living silver; she would pass like an undine beneath cascades, whose light and dazzling spray would conceal her form as though it were overspread with a veil of gauze; and then, far different from the majority of Creole women, whose sickly complexions scarcely any emotion will colour, her cheeks would be dyed with a tint so rich and vivid, that the negroes, accustomed in their poetical

and highly coloured language, to bestow on every thing a distinguishing appellation, called Sara by no other name than *The Rose of the Black River*.

Sara, as we have said, was therefore supremely happy, since she had in perspective—the one for that very day, the other for the following evening—the two things she loved best in the world; that is to say, the country and a ball.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATH.

At the period of which we write, the island was not, as it is at present, intersected by well-made roads, which permit an easy transit for carriages from one quarter of the colony to the other; the only means of travelling were either on horseback or in palanquin. Whenever Sara undertook an excursion into the country along with Henri and M. de Malmedie, the horse obtained the preference without hesitation, for riding was one of the exercises most familiar to the young girl; but when, on the contrary, she travelled in company with her governess, she was obliged to renounce this description of locomotion, to which the grave Englishwoman much preferred the palanquin. It was therefore in palanquins, each borne by four negroes and followed by a relay of four others, that Sara and her governess journeyed side by side, sufficiently near each other, however, to be able to converse through their open curtains, whilst their bearers, certain before-hand of a good gratuity, loudly chaunted their native melodies, announcing thus to the passers-by the generosity of their young mistress.

Henrietta and Sara however formed the most striking contrast, both in person and mind, it was possible to imagine. The reader is already acquainted with Sara, the capricious young maiden, with jet black hair and eyes, a complexion which varied with every shade of thought, teeth white as pearl, hands and feet delicately formed as those of a child, and a form supple and undulating as that of a sylph. We must now beg permission to give him some information respecting *ma mie Henriette*.

Henrietta Smith was born in the metropolis of Great Britain, and was the daughter of a professor, who,

having destined her for the calling of a teacher, had carefully instructed her in the French and Italian languages, which had become, thanks to this early study, as familiar to her as her native tongue. The profession of a teacher is one in which, as every one knows, but little fortune can be amassed. Mr. Smith had therefore died poor, leaving his daughter Henrietta highly accomplished, but without a farthing in the world; a circumstance which may account, perhaps, for the young lady having attained the age of twenty-five years without having yet found a husband.

About this time, one of her friends, as excellent a musician as she was herself, and a perfect mistress of languages, proposed to Miss Smith to join their respective talents for their mutual benefit, and commence a school, the profits derived from which were to be equally divided. The offer was most agreeable to Henrietta, and was at once accepted. But although each of the two associates gave to the education of the young girls confided to their care, all the attention and devotion of which she was capable, the establishment, somehow or other, did not prosper, and the two friends were accordingly obliged to dissolve their connexion.

In the meantime, the father of one of Henrietta's pupils, a wealthy London merchant, received from M. de Malmédie, his correspondent, a letter in which the latter requested him to procure for him a governess for his niece, offering to this person advantages sufficient to compensate for the sacrifices she would make in thus voluntarily expatriating herself. This letter was communicated to Miss Smith. The poor girl, destitute of all resources, had no tie to bind her to a country in which she had no other prospect than that of dying of hunger; she therefore regarded the offer made to her as a blessing from Heaven, and accordingly embarked on board the very first ship which left England for the Mauritius, recommended to M. de Malmédie as a highly talented young person, and in every way worthy of his regard and respect. M. de Malmédie received her in conse-

quence most graciously, and at once confided to her care the education of his niece and ward, Sara, then a little girl of nine years of age.

The first question which Miss Smith asked M. de Malmedie, was, what sort of education he wished his niece to receive? M. de Malmedie replied, that that was a subject which he would leave entirely to her, as it was to disembarass himself of this care, that he had determined upon procuring a governess for his niece; and that it was her business, as a well-informed person, to teach her charge whatever she knew herself. He merely added as a sort of postscript, that the young lady being irrevocably destined to become the bride of her cousin Henri, it was an important point that she should not contract an affection for another. This decision of M. de Malmedie with regard to the future union of his son and niece, was formed not only on account of the affection he entertained for both, but also because Sara, left an orphan at three years of age, had inherited from her deceased parents a fortune of about a million of francs—a sum which had nearly doubled itself during the guardianship of M. de Malmedie.

Sara was at first terribly afraid of her English governess, and, at the first glance, the aspect of Miss Smith, it must be confessed, was not much calculated to re-assure her: in fact, she was then a tall, thin personage, of between thirty and thirty-two years of age, to whom the exercise of the boarding-school had imparted a dry, prim, old-maidish appearance. Her clear, cold eye, pale complexion, and thin compressed lips, presented something automaton-like in their appearance, which actually astonished the beholder; while her hair, of a pale ashy tint, had great difficulty in animating a little this icy *ensemble*. Completely dressed, laced, and curled for the day, from an early hour in the morning, Sara had never once surprised her *en négligé*; and for a long time, she actually imagined that Miss Smith, in place of retiring to bed at night like other mortals, was

in the habit of hanging herself up like a puppet to one of the pegs of her wardrobe, from which position she descended in the morning, dressed as she had been the preceding day. The result was, that, during the first few months of her government, Sara obeyed her teacher very punctually, and learned a little English and Italian. As to music, Sara was organized like a nightingale, and played almost by intuition on the piano-forte and guitar, although her favourite instrument, and the one which she preferred to all others, was the Malgache harp, from which she drew sounds that ravished the ears of the most celebrated virtuosos of the island.

All this progress in education, however, was made without Sara losing anything of her individuality, and without her primitive nature becoming in any way modified. On her side, Miss Smith remained such as nature and education had made her; so that these two natures, so diametrically opposed to each other, lived together side by side without either yielding in anything to the other. Nevertheless as both were endowed, though in different ways, with excellent qualities, ma mie Henriette ended by conceiving a deep attachment for her young charge, while Sara, on her side, felt a lively friendship for her governess. The evidence of this mutual affection was, that the instructress called Sara, my child; and that Sara, finding the appellation of Miss, or Mademoiselle, too cold a one for the sentiments she felt towards her governess, invented for her the more affectionate title of ma mie Henriette.

But it was above all with respect to the exercises of the body, that ma mie Henriette had preserved her constitutional antipathy: in fact, her exclusively scholastic education had developed only her moral faculties, leaving her physical acquirements in all their natural *gaucherie*; consequently, despite the repeatedly expressed wishes of Sara, Henrietta would never trust herself upon the back of a four-footed animal, not even excepting Berloque, the quiet little pony belonging to

the kitchen garden. The narrow roads, also, made her so giddy that she frequently preferred making a circuit of two or three leagues to passing the brink of a precipice, and it was never without a palpitation of the heart that she ventured into a boat of any description; for scarcely had she seated herself, and the bark had been put in motion, than the poor governess would declare that she was about to have a relapse of sea sickness, from which, she affirmed, she had never for a day been free during the entire voyage from Portsmouth to Port Louis, that is to say, during a space of four months. The result was, that the existence of *ma mie* Henriette was passed in a state of constant anxiety with regard to Sara, and that, when she saw her, bold as an amazon, mount her cousin's horace—when she beheld her, light as a chamois, bounding from rock to rock—when she would watch her, graceful as an undine, gliding along the surface of the water, or disappearing for a moment beneath its waves,—her poor, almost motherly, heart would palpitate with terror, and she resembled one of those unhappy fowls who have hatched a brood of young ducks, and who, whilst beholding their adopted progeny making all haste to the water, remain on the brink of the pond, unable to comprehend such fool-hardiness, and clacking most dolorously, to recall their rash little ones, who are exposing themselves to such dangers.

Ma mie Henriette, then, although borne along at the moment in a very easy and very secure palanquin, was, nevertheless, as usual pre-occupied with a thousand anxieties for the future, which Sara did not fail to make her experience, whilst she held forth, in glowing strains, on the expected pleasures of these two happy days.

We must not forget to mention that the morning was magnificent. It was one of those lovely days at the commencement of the autumn (for the month of May, our spring, is the autumn of the Isle of France), when Nature, preparing to shroud herself in a veil of

rain, bids her sweetest adieu to the sun. In proportion as they advanced, the character of the landscape became wilder, and they crossed, by means of bridges whose fragility made the susceptible Henrietta tremble, the double source of the Rampart river, and the cascades of the Tamarind river. Having arrived at the foot of the mountain of the Trois-Mamelles, Sara made inquiries respecting her uncle and her consins, and learned that they were at that moment hunting with their friends, between the great basin and the plains of St. Pierre. At length they crossed the little Boucant river, wound round the base of the Hill of the great Black River, and found themselves in front of M. de Malmedie's country-house.

Sara first ran to pay a visit to the old domestics of the house, whom she had not seen for a fortnight. Thence she proceeded to bid good morning to her aviary, an immense cage formed of iron wire which enclosed an entire thicket, and in which were confined together Turtle Doves of Guida, blue and grey Fegniers, Fondi-Jalas, and Gobemouches. She then proceeded to her flowers, which had almost all been brought originally from Paris: there were Tuberoses, Chinese carnations, Anemonies, Ranunculuses, and Indian roses, in the midst of which arose, like the queen of the tropics, the beautiful Amaranth from the Cape. All these were inclosed by hedges of frangipanes and Chinese roses, which, like our monthly roses, flourish during all the year. This was Sara's legitimate kingdom, the rest of the island was her conquest.

So long as Sara remained in the gardens of the dwelling-house, all went well with ma mie Henriette, who there found smoothly gravelled walks, refreshing shades, and an air laden with perfumes. But it may be readily supposed that this tranquillity was but short-lived: a kind word to the old mulatto woman, who had been Sara's nurse, and who now, invalided from service, passed the remainder of her days in dignified retirement at Black River—a hurried kiss to her favourite

turtle dove—a race to gather a few flowers, and braid them in her hair,—and it was over. The hour had arrived to take a walk, and thenceforward began the thousand anxieties of the poor governess. In the earlier years of her government, Miss Smith had endeavoured with all her might to resist the independent little girl, and to lead her inclinations to less vagrant pleasures; but she soon discovered that this was an impossible task. Sara invariably escaped from her hands, and took her rambles without her; so that Henrietta's uneasiness for her pupil being still greater than her own personal fears, she had ended by making up her mind to accompany her. It is true, that she almost always contented herself with taking up a position on an elevated place, from whence she could follow, with her eyes, the young girl in all her ascents and descents, and by this means felt more at ease, as she kept her pupil in sight, and within reach of her voice. On this occasion, as on all the rest, *ma mie* Henriette, seeing Sara disposed for a ramble, resigned herself as usual to her fate, took up a book while her charge amused herself wandering about, and prepared to accompany her.

But Sara had planned another species of amusement in place of a promenade, and on this occasion it was a bath which the young girl had promised herself, in the beautifully calm and limpid bay of the Black River, in whose transparent waters you can distinguish, at a depth of twenty feet, the madrepores growing out of the sand, and an entire family of crustaceæ crawling among their branches. As usual, however, she had been careful not to breathe a syllable of her project to *ma mie* Henriette; the old mulatto woman alone was admitted into the secret, and was directed to await her mistress, with her bathing dresses, at the appointed spot.

The governess and her young charge left the dwelling-house, and proceeded along the banks of the Black River, which widened as they advanced, until at length

they beheld the bay opening before them like a vast mirror. Its banks were bordered with immense and lofty trees whose trunks shot up like long slender columns supporting the immense canopy of foliage, which was so dense as almost totally to exclude the light of day, whilst their roots seemed like myriads of serpents, who, no longer able to bore their way into the rocks which constantly roll down from the top of the mountain, enveloped them with their folds. In proportion as the bed of the river widened, the trees on either bank, profiting by the interval left by the water, inclined towards each other, forming thus a vault which resembled a gigantic tent. The whole scene was dark, solitary, calm, and silent, full of poetic melancholy and mysterious seclusion; the only sounds audible were the hoarse screams of the grey-headed parroquets; the only living creatures to be seen, as far as the eye could reach, were a few of those reddish-coloured monkeys named aigrettes, the plagues of the plantations, and which have bred so fast, and have become so numerous in the island, that all attempts to extirpate them have proved ineffectual. From time to time, however, startled by the sound of Sara's and her governess's footsteps, a king-fisher with its bright green plumage and white throat and breast, would dart from its hiding-place uttering its shrill and plaintive cry, and, skimming along the current, rapid as an arrow and brilliant as an emerald, would disappear among the mangroves which dipped their branches in the river on the opposite side. This luxuriant display of tropical vegetation, these profound solitudes, these wild beauties, which harmonized so well together—rocks, trees, and river,—these formed the Nature that Sara loved, these were the scenes which her primitive imagination understood, this was the paradise impossible for pen or pencil to reproduce, but on which her mind dwelt with love and tenderness.

Ma mie Henriette was not, we must hasten to confess, altogether insensible to this magnificent spectacle; but, as we are aware, her constant anxiety prevented her from completely enjoying it. Having reached the

summit of a little hillock from which she could command a pretty extensive view around her, she seated herself upon a mossy bank, and after having, though without hope of success, invited Sara to seat herself beside her, she gazed for a moment after the receding figure of the light-hearted young girl, as she bounded away, from rock to rock, far from her, and then, with a sort of half sigh, she drew from her pocket the tenth or twelfth volume of *Clarissa Harlowe*, her favourite romance, and commenced the perusal of it for about the twentieth time.

As for Sara, she continued to skirt the shores of the bay, and soon afterwards disappeared behind an enormous clump of bamboos. It was at this spot that the mulatto woman awaited her young mistress with her bathing costume.

The young girl advanced towards the margin of the stream, springing from rock to rock with the lightness and agility of a fawn; then after having, with the timid modesty of an antique nymph, assured herself that all was indeed silent and deserted around her, she began to let fall her garments, one after another, in order to envelop herself in a tunic of white linen, which fastened round her neck and beneath the bosom, and descending to the knee, left her arms and limbs naked, and consequently free in their movements. Standing thus on the river's bank, the young maiden resembled the figure of the huntress *Diana*, preparing to descend into her bath.

Sara then advanced towards the point of a rock which overhung the bay, at a spot where the water was of a vast depth; and then, bold and confident in her strength and address, certain of her superiority in an element from which, like *Venus*, she might in some sort be said to have sprung, she leaped from her elevated position, disappeared beneath the waters, and in the course of a few seconds re-appeared, swimming at a few yards' distance from the spot from whence she had thrown herself into the stream.

All at once *ma mie Henriette* heard herself called by.

name. She raised her head, gazed round her for some time, until at length, directed by a second appeal, her eyes fell upon the fair bather, and she beheld her gliding along the surface of the water. The first impulse of the poor governess was to recall Sara, but as she knew that that would be but lost labour, she contented herself by making her pupil a gesture of reproach, and rising from her seat, she advanced as near to the edge of the river as the steepness of the rock on which she stood would permit.

At this moment, however, her attention was distracted for an instant by the signs which Sara was making to her. The young girl, while swimming with one hand, stretched out the other in the direction of the thickest part of the wood, indicating by this gesture that something new and strange was passing beneath these shadowy vaults of verdure. Henrietta listened, and soon distinguished the far-off bayings of a pack of hounds. In a few moments it appeared as though these sounds drew nearer to her, and in this opinion she was confirmed by fresh signs made by Sara. In fact, every instant the sounds grew louder and more distinct, and soon the crackling noise produced by a rapid chase was heard amid the lofty underwood. At length, all at once, at about two hundred paces above the spot on which *ma mie* Henriette was standing, a beautiful stag, his head erect, and horns thrown back over his neck, issued from the forest, sprang with one bound over the river, and disappeared among the shadows of the wood on the other side. In another instant the dogs appeared, in their turn crossed the river at the same spot at which the stag had done, and buried themselves in the forest upon his track.

Sara had taken part in this spectacle, with all the wild excitement of a true huntress. So, when stag and dogs alike had disappeared, she uttered an exclamation of pleasure, but to this exclamation of joy succeeded a cry of terror, so shrill and heart-rending, that the governess turned round in alarm. The old mulatto wo-

man was standing upon the bank, like a statue of fear and terror, and stretching out her arm towards an enormous shark which, having, by the aid of a high tide, crossed the bar, was now at about sixty paces from Sara, slowly swimming towards her, his huge fin plainly perceptible above the level of the water. The poor governess had not even strength sufficient to utter a cry—she fell upon her knees.

At the cry of the mulatto woman, Sara had turned round, and now beheld the danger which threatened her. Then, with admirable presence of mind, she struck out for the nearest part of the shore. But this bank was at least forty paces from her, and, despite the strength and skill with which she swam, it was more than probable that she would be overtaken by the monster, before she could succeed in reaching the land.

At this moment a second cry was heard, and a negro, holding a long poniard between his teeth, sprang from amidst the thicket of mangroves which lined the bank, and with one vigorous bound cleared almost a third of the width of the bay; then striking out on the water with almost superhuman strength, he advanced to intercept the course of the shark, which during this time, as if he had been certain of his prey, gained, without using any extra movements of his tail, with frightful rapidity upon the young girl, who, turning her head at each stroke which she made, could see approaching together, and with almost equal swiftness, her enemy and her defender.

It was a moment of terrible anxiety for Henrietta and the old mulatto woman, who now standing together on the highest point of ground, could behold the progress of this frightful race: both, breathless, their arms extended, their lips half-opened, without any means in their power of assisting Sara, uttered half-stifled cries at each alternation of fear and hope that they experienced; but soon fear took entire possession of them. Despite the efforts of the swimmer, the shark gained upon him. The negro was still at the distance of

twenty paces from the monster, when the latter was no more than a few arms' length from Sara. One terrible blow of his tail upon the water brought him still nearer to his prey. The young girl, pale as death, could hear, scarcely ten feet behind her, the rushing noise produced by the shark passing through the water. She cast one last glance of despair towards that bank she had no longer time to reach, and now comprehending the uselessness of any longer disputing with her enemy the possession of a fated life, she raised her eyes to heaven, and, clasping her hands together above the water, implored the mercy of that God who alone could save her. At this moment the shark turned to seize his prey, and, in place of his greenish-coloured back, his white belly glanced close to the surface of the water. Henrietta put her hands to her eyes to shut out the horrible spectacle which was about to take place, when, at this last moment, the twofold report of a double-barrelled fowling-piece was heard to the right of the governess, and two balls, succeeding each other with the rapidity of lightning, cut into the stream, whilst a calm and sonorous voice, with the accent of a sportsman satisfied with himself, uttered these words:

“Well hit!”

Ma mie Henriette turned round and beheld, hanging over this frightful scene, a young man who, holding his still smoking fowling-piece in one hand, and supporting himself by the other from a branch of a cinnaomond tree, was leaning over the extremity of the rock, and gazing at the convulsions of the wounded shark.

In fact, hit by both balls, the animal had now assumed his first position, as if to seek the invisible enemy by whom he had been struck. Then, perceiving the negro who was now within but three or four arms' length of him, he abandoned Sara to attack this new comer, but at his approach the negro dived, and disappeared under the waves. The shark disappeared in his turn. Ere long the river was agitated by the lashing of the monster's tail, the surface of the water was dyed

with blood, and it became evident that a furious conflict was going on in the depths of the waters.

During this time, *ma mie* Henriette had descended, or rather had let herself slip down, the rock, and had run to the bank to stretch out her hand to Sarah, who, nearly exhausted, and scarcely able yet to believe that she had really escaped the danger which menaced her, had no sooner touched the earth than she fell upon her knees. As to her governess, scarcely had she beheld her dear pupil in safety, when her strength failed her in her turn, and she sank down upon the bank in an almost fainting condition.

When the two women returned to consciousness, the first thing that struck them was the negro *Laïza* standing on the shore, covered with blood, his arms and legs dreadfully lacerated, while the dead body of the shark might be seen floating on the surface of the water.

Then both, at the same time, and as if actuated by one common feeling, turned their eyes towards the rock on which had appeared the liberating angel. The rock was solitary, the liberator had disappeared, but not before he had been recognised by both as the young stranger of Port Louis.

Sara then turned towards the negro, who had just given so great a proof of devotion. But after a moment of earnest but mute contemplation, the negro had thrown himself into the woods, and Sara looked around in vain—like the stranger, the negro had also disappeared.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRICE OF SLAVES.

At the same instant, two persons, who from a higher point of the river had beheld a part of the scene which had just taken place, hastened to the spot: these were M. de Malmedie and Henri.

The young girl then for the first time reflected that she was half naked, and blushing at the idea of having been seen thus, she called the old mulatto woman, hastily slipped on a loose wrapper, and leaning on the arm of her governess, who was still trembling with fear and anxiety, advanced towards her uncle and cousin.

Following the course of the chase, they had reached the bank of the river at the moment when the double report of George's fowling-piece met their ears. Their first idea was that it was one of their companions who had fired at the deer. They then raised their eyes towards the spot from whence the report had proceeded, and as we have mentioned, had seen from afar off and imperfectly, a portion of the scene which we have already described.

Behind M. de Malmedie came the rest of the sportsmen. Sara and her governess soon found themselves the centre of a group, who questioned them about what had passed, but as *ma mie* Henriette was still too much agitated to reply, it was left to Sara to relate the circumstances which had occurred.

There is a wide difference between having been the witness of a scene as terrible as that which we have just endeavoured to describe, having followed with terror-stricken eye the entire details of that race of life and death, and hearing the recital of the same events, even though it be from the lips of one who has almost

been their victim, and though it be upon the very theatre on which they have passed; yet, as the smoke of the fowling-piece had scarcely yet drifted away, and as the body of the monster still lay floating on the water in the last convulsions of his agony, Sara's narrative produced a great effect. Each gallantly lamented not having been in the place of the negro or of the unknown; each felt assured that he would most certainly have aimed as true as the one, or have swum as vigorously as the other; but to all these protestations of address and of devotion, a secret voice within the recesses of Sara's heart replied, that those two alone could have performed what they had done.

At this moment the barking of the dogs announced that the stag was at bay. Every one knows what pleasure it gives a true sportsman to be in at the death of an animal he has been in pursuit of the whole morning. Sara was saved, Sara had no longer anything to fear; it was therefore useless to waste time in condolences upon an accident which, after all, had led to no disastrous result—time, too, that could be so well occupied. Two or three of the hunters, who were standing at the outer edge of the circle of Sara's auditors, now stole off in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded. Henri then observed that it would be uncivil not to accompany those whom he had invited, and to whom he ought to do the honours of his domain, to the close of the hunt: in short, at the expiration of about ten minutes, there remained no other cavalier, save M. de Malmédie, beside Sara and her governess.

All three returned slowly to the house, where a substantial dinner awaited the huntsmen, who, with Henri at their head, were not long in following. The young man gallantly presented to his cousin, as a trophy of his prowess, the stag's hoof which he had cut off with his own hands. Sara thanked him for this graceful mark of his attention, while Henri on his side congratulated his cousin on having regained her beautiful colour

so completely that to see her no one would have imagined that anything extraordinary had taken place—a sentiment in which the rest of the sportsmen unanimously agreed.

The dinner was gay and joyous. Ma mie Henriette requested to be excused from forming one of the party; the poor governess had been so terribly shaken by the events of the morning, that a slight attack of fever was the consequence. As for Sara, so far as outward appearances went, she displayed, as Henri had said, all the evidences of perfect tranquillity, and did the honours of the dinner-table with her habitual grace.

During the desert several toasts were drunk, among which it is but justice to say that some allusions were made to the events of the morning; but in these toasts there was no mention either of the negro or the unknown sportsman. All the honour of the miracle was very properly given to Providence, who had preserved to M. de Malmedie and Henri a niece and a betrothed so tenderly beloved.

But if during the intervals of these toasts, no one breathed a syllable respecting Laïza and George, whose names indeed they were unacquainted with, each in return described in glowing colours his deeds of personal prowess, and Sara, with charming irony, distributed to each the share of praises which was due to his address and courage in the field.

As they were about to rise from table the overseer entered. He came to announce to M. de Malmedie, that a negro, who had attempted to escape, had been caught and brought back to the camp. As this was a circumstance of every-day occurrence, M. de Malmedie contented himself with replying:—

“Very well; let the usual correction be administered.”

“What is that, uncle?” inquired Sara.

“Nothing of any consequence, my child,” replied M. de Malmedie. And the conversation, interrupted for a moment by this incident, was again resumed.

Ten minutes afterwards, it was announced that the horses were ready. As Lord William Murray's dinner and ball were fixed for the following evening, each was desirous of having the entire day to prepare for this solemnity, and it had been arranged, therefore, that they should return to Port Louis immediately after dinner.

Sara now proceeded to the apartment of *ma mie* Henriette. The poor governess, without being seriously ill, was still in such a state of agitation that Sara positively insisted she should remain at Black River. Our heroine was a gainer moreover by this prolonged sojourn; in place of returning in a palanquin, she could now return on horseback.

As the little cavalcade was starting, Sara saw three or four negroes busily engaged in cutting up the shark. The old mulatto woman had informed them where they should find the carcass of the animal, and they had hastened to fish it out of the water for the sake of its oil.

As they approached the *Trois-Mamelles*, the sportsmen beheld from afar all the negroes on the estate assembled together. Having reached the spot, they found that the crowd had collected for punishment; it being the custom, on such occasions, to collect together all the negroes belonging to the estate, and to compel them to witness the chastisement of whatever one of their companions had committed a fault.

The criminal in this instance was a young man of about seventeen years of age, who stood tightly bound beside the ladder on which he was to be stretched, awaiting the hour fixed upon for his punishment. This moment had been delayed, on the earnest prayers of another negro, until the passing of the cavalcade; the slave who had solicited this reprieve having said that he had something of importance to communicate to *M. de Malmedie*. In fact, at the moment when *M. de Malmedie* arrived opposite the criminal, a negro who had hitherto been sitting beside the latter, engaged in bathing a

wound he had in his head, arose and approached the high road, but was stopped by the overseer.

"What is the matter?" demanded M. de Malmedie.

"Monsieur," said the overseer, "it is the negro Nazim, who is about to receive the hundred and fifty lashes to which he has been sentenced."

"And why has he been sentenced to receive a hundred and fifty lashes?" demanded Sara.

"Because he ran away," replied the negro.

"Ah ha!" exclaimed Henri, "that is the man whom they gave notice had escaped?"

"The same."

"And how did you catch him?"

"Oh! very simply: I waited quietly until he had got too far from the land to regain the shore either by rowing or swimming, and then I jumped into a good skiff manned by eight stout men, and started in pursuit. After doubling the south-west cape, we perceived him nearly two leagues ahead of us, out at sea. As he had but two hands, and we sixteen, and as he had but a miserable canoe, and we an excellent pirogue, we soon came up with him. He then threw himself overboard, and endeavoured to regain the island by swimming, diving like a porpoise, but at last he tired himself out, and as the chase began to be fatiguing, I snatched an oar from the hands of one of the men, and at the moment when he rose to the surface, I gave him a blow on the head, so well applied that this time I imagined that he had dived for ever. However, in a few moments we saw him once more appear. He had fainted; so we hauled him into the pirogue, bound him hand and foot, and rowed him home, still in the same condition. He did not recover his senses until we got to Mount Brabant; and here he is."

"But," said Sara, hastily, "the poor fellow was perhaps seriously hurt?"

"Oh! dear no, mademoiselle," replied the overseer; "merely a scratch; these devils of negroes have heads like iron."

"Well then, why have you delayed so long administering the correction he so well merits?" said M. de Malmedie; "according to the orders which I gave, it ought to have been already done."

"And it would have been done too sir," replied the overseer, "if his brother, who is one of our best labourers, had not assured me that he had something of importance to communicate to you before the order should be executed. As you were about to pass so near the camp, and as it would occasion merely the delay of a quarter of an hour, I took upon myself to put off the punishment."

"And you did right, overseer," said Sara. "But where is he?"

"Who?"

"The brother of this unfortunate."

"Yes, where is he?" demanded M. de Malmedie.

"Here I am," said Lalza, advancing.

Sara uttered an exclamation of surprise: she had recognised, in the brother of the condemned, the individual who had so generously risked his own life that morning to save hers. And yet, strange to relate, the negro had not once cast a glance towards her, nor did he appear even to recognise her; but in place of imploring her intercession, which he had indeed the strongest right to claim, he continued to advance towards M. de Malmedie. Sara could not however be deceived in his identity: the wounds left by the shark's teeth in his arms and thighs, were still raw and bleeding.

"What do you want with me?" said M. de Malmedie.

"To beg a favour from you," replied Lalza, speaking in a low tone, in order that his brother who stood bound a short distance off might not overhear him.

"And what is it?"

"Nazim is weak, Nazim is a child, Nazim is wounded in the head, and has lost much blood! Nazim will not perhaps have strength enough to support the

punishment he has incurred; he may chance to die under the lash. And then you will have lost a negro who is, taking every thing into consideration, worth at least two hundred piastres."

"Well, what is all this about?"

"I wish to propose an exchange."

"In what way?"

"Let them give me the hundred and fifty lashes he has been sentenced to. I am strong and can bear them, and that will not prevent me being at work to-morrow as usual. Whilst he, I repeat, is but a child—he would die under them."

"That cannot be," replied M. de Malmedie, whilst Sara, keeping her eyes fixed upon this man, gazed at him with the most profound astonishment.

"And why cannot it be?"

"Because it would be an act of injustice."

"You deceive yourself, for it is I who am the true criminal."—"You?"

"Yes, I," replied Laiza. 'Twas I who urged Nazim to fly; 'twas I who hollowed out the canoe in which he made his escape; 'twas I who shaved his head with a piece of broken bottle; 'twas I who gave him the cocoa nut oil to anoint himself with. You see plainly therefore that it is I, and not Nazim, who deserve to be punished."

"You are mistaken," replied Henri, mingling in his turn in the discussion. "You ought both of you to be punished; he for having run away, and you for having aided him to escape."

"Then let them give me the three hundred lashes, and so end the affair."

"Overseer," said M. de Malmedie, "let each of these rascals have a hundred and fifty lashes, and have done with it."

"One moment, uncle," exclaimed Sara; "I claim the pardon of both these men."

"And what for, pray?" demanded M. de Malmedie, astonished.

"Because this is the man who so bravely threw himself into the river this morning to save my life."

"She has recognised me!" cried Laiza.

"Because, in place of a punishment, it is a reward which he merits, and which he ought to receive."

"Then," said Laiza, "if you believe that I merit a reward, grant me Nazim's pardon."

"The devil!" cried M. de Malmédie, "how fast you go on. Was it you who saved my niece?"

"It was not I," replied the negro; "had it not been for the young chasseur she would have been lost."

"But he did all in his power to save me, uncle. He fought with the shark," cried the young girl. "And look, see! see!—his wounds are still bleeding."

"I fought against the shark," replied Laiza; "but it was in my own defence. The shark turned upon me, and I was obliged to kill him to save my own life."

"Well, uncle, surely you will not refuse me their pardon," said Sara.

"Yes, indeed I must," replied M. de Malmédie; "for if there was once an example of pardon having been granted on a like occasion, all these black rascals would be off the next week, in the hopes that they would always have a pair of pretty lips like yours to intercede for them."

"But, uncle——"

"Ask all these gentlemen if the thing is possible," said M. de Malmédie, turning with an air of confidence towards the young men who accompanied his son.

"The fact is," they all replied, "that such an act of mercy would be productive of the worst consequences."

"You hear, Sara."

"But a man who has risked his life for me ought not to be punished the very day he has perilled it," argued Sara; "for if you owe him a punishment, I in my turn owe him a reward."

"Well, then, let us each of us pay our debt; when I have punished him, you may reward him."

"But, after all, uncle, what signifies the fault these

fortunates have committed. What wrong have they you, since they have not been able to carry their n into execution?"

What wrong have they done me? Why, they have away the greater part of their value. A negro has attempted to escape loses cent. per cent. upon market price. Now, look at these two fellows! Yes, y they were well worth—this one five hundred, and other three hundred, piastres—that is to say, eight red piastres altogether. Well, if I were to ask six red piastres for them to-day, no one would give it e."

The fact is, I would not this minute give six hun-," said one of the young sportsmen who accom- ed Henri.

Well, sir, I will be more generous than you," said ice whose deep and thrilling accents made Sara ; "I will give a thousand."

he young girl turned, and recognised the stranger rt Louis, the liberating angel of the rock.

was standing close by, dressed in a plain but ele- sporting costume, and leaning upon his double- led gun. He had heard the whole discussion.

h, it is you, monsieur!" said M. de Malmedie, a feeling which he was unable to account for the blood to mount into Henri's face. "In the first ray accept my acknowledgments, for my niece rmed me that she owes her life to you; and had own where to find you, I should have hastened ou, not to endeavour to acquit myself of my nsieur—that would be impossible—but to ex- ou my sincere gratitude."

ranger, without replying, bowed with an air ful modesty which did not escape Sara, for ed to add: "My uncle is right, monsieur; es can never be repaid; but be assured, that I live, I shall remember that it is to you life."

arges of powder and two bullets are not

worth so many thanks, mademoiselle; and I shall therefore esteem myself most fortunate if M. de Malmedie's gratitude extends so far as to grant me, at the price which I have offered, those two negro slaves, of whom I am much in need."

"Henri," said M. de Malmedie, in a low voice, to his son, "did not some one say, that the day before yesterday, there was a slaver in sight of the island?"

"Yes, father," replied Henri.

"Good!" continued M. de Malmedie, speaking this time to himself. "Good! We shall find means to replace them."

"I await your reply, monsieur," said the stranger.

"Oh, certainly, sir! with the greatest pleasure! These negroes are yours, you can take them; but were I in your place, look you, although they might not be able to work for a day or two, I would administer to them, this very day, the correction they deserve."

"That is my affair," said the stranger, with a smile; "the thousand piastres will be at your house this evening."

"Pardon me, sir," interposed Henri, "but you have mistaken my father's meaning; his intention was not to sell you these two men, but to give them to you. The existence of these two miserable negroes cannot be put in comparison with a life so precious as that of my fair cousin. But let us offer you at least what we have, and what you appear to desire."

"But, sir," said the stranger, drawing himself up haughtily, whilst M. de Malmedie made a most significant grimace at his son, "this was not our agreement."

"Well, then," said Sara, "permit me to make some change in your arrangement; and out of regard for her whose life you have saved, accept these two negroes which we offer you."

"I thank you, mademoiselle," said the stranger; "it would be ridiculous in me to hold out any longer. I accept them therefore, and it is I who am now your debtor."

And the stranger, in token that he wished no longer to detain the cavalcade upon the high road, bowed and moved a step backwards.

The men exchanged salutations, but Sara and George exchanged a glance.

The little party moved on. George gazed after them for some time with that frown which was habitual to him, when any bitter reflection occupied his mind. Then turning towards the negroes, and approaching Nazim: "Unbind this man," said he to the overseer, "for he and his brother now belong to me."

The overseer, who had heard the conversation which had taken place between the stranger and M. de Malmédie, made no difficulty in obeying. Nazim was therefore unbound, and delivered along with Laïza into the hands of his new master.

"And now, my friends," said the stranger, turning towards the group of negroes, and drawing from his pocket a purse filled with gold, "as I have received a gift from your master, I must make you a little present. Take this purse, and divide its contents amongst you."

So saying, he placed his purse in the hands of the negro who stood nearest to him. Then turning round to his two slaves, who, standing behind him, awaited his orders in respectful silence:

"As for you two," said he, "from this moment do what you please—go where you please—you are free."

Laïza and Nazim each uttered a cry of mingled joy and uncertainty, for they could scarcely believe in this generosity from a man to whom they had rendered no service; but George repeated his words, and then Laïza and Nazim fell upon their knees, kissing, with a burst of gratitude impossible to be described, the hand which had thus delivered them.

As for George, as it now began to grow late, he replaced on his head his broad-brimmed straw hat, which he had hitherto held in his hand, and throwing his fowling-piece over his shoulder, resumed his walk towards Moka.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BALL.

It was on the following evening, as we have mentioned, that this dinner and ball, the bare announcement of which, three days before, had revolutionized Port Louis, were to take place at the Government House.

Those who have not lived for some time in the colonies, and above all in the Isle of France, can form no idea of the luxury which reigns under the twentieth degree of south latitude. Besides all the marvels of Parisian art which cross the ocean to embellish the forms of the wealthy and graceful Creoles of the Mauritius, the inhabitants are enabled to have the first choice of the diamonds of Visapour, the pearls of Ophir, the cachemeres of Siam, and the muslins of Calcutta. There is not a ship bound from the land of the Arabian Nights, that does not touch at the Isle of France, and there deposit a portion of the treasures it is transporting to Europe. So, even for one habituated to Parisian elegance or English profusion, the brilliant spectacle presented by a re-union in the Isle of France is something extraordinary.

The reception rooms of Government House, which Lord William Murray, a member of the highest English fashion and a most strenuous partisan of British comfort, had in three days entirely re-furnished, presented, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the aspect of a suite of apartments in the Rue du Mont Blanc or Belgrave Square. All the aristocracy of the colony was there; the men in that simple attire imposed by our modern fashions, the women, dressed beforehand for the ball, covered with diamonds, and rustling with pearls, and distinguished from Europeans only by that soft and delicious morbidezza, the characteristic of Creole women alone. As each name was uttered by the chamberlain,

a general smile greeted the person announced; for at Port Louis, as may easily be imagined, all are acquainted with each other, and the only feeling of curiosity excited on the entrance of a lady guest, is that of knowing what new dress she has purchased, from whence it has arrived, of what material it is composed, and how it is trimmed. It was towards the English women particularly, however, that the curiosity of the fair Creoles was directed; for in this eternal conflict of extravagance and profusion, of which Port Louis is the theatre, the grand object of the natives is to vanquish foreigners in luxury. The murmur which was raised at each new arrival, therefore, and the whispering which followed it, were in general both louder and more prolonged when the official announcement of the chamberlain was that of some Britannic name, the rude dissonance of which harmonized as little with the names of the country, as the pale features of the northern beauties did with the dark-eyed virgins of the tropics. At each fresh arrival Lord William Murray, with that air of high breeding and aristocratic politeness which distinguishes the higher classes of English society, advanced to meet his guest. If it were a lady, he offered her his arm to conduct her to her place, adroitly whispering a compliment in the way: if a gentleman, he cordially shook him by the hand; and always found some gracious observation to make to him; so that every one felt charmed with their new governor's affability and politeness.

At length the names of MM. and Mademoiselle de Malmedie were announced. This was an arrival expected with as much impatience as curiosity, not altogether because M. de Malmedie was in fact one of the wealthiest and most distinguished inhabitants of the Isle of France, but rather because Sara was one of the richest and most beautiful heiresses in the island. Every eye therefore was fixed upon Lord William Murray as he advanced to meet her, for it was her toilette, above all, which occupied the most prominent place in the minds of the fair guests.

Contrary to the custom of Creole ladies in general, and contrary to all expectation, Sara's toilette was as simple as possible. It consisted of a beautiful dress of India muslin, light and transparent as that gauze which Juvenal calls "a tissue of woven air;" without a single embroidery, without a single pearl, a single diamond, trimmed only with a sprig of the wild rose tree. A wreath of the same encircled the brow of the young maiden, and a bouquet of its flowers trembled in her girdle; no bracelet glittered upon her arm, no necklace enhanced the transparent polish of her ivory neck. Her hair, black as jet, fell in long and silky ringlets upon her shoulders; and she held in her hand the fan, that marvel of Chinese industry, which she had purchased two days before from Miko-Miko.

As we mentioned before, all are acquainted with each other in the Isle of France; so that after the arrival of MM. and Mademoiselle de Malmedie, each perceived that there was no one else to come, since all those who from their rank or fortune were entitled to be present, had now assembled. Accordingly all eyes were now naturally turned from the door, through which they no longer expected any one to enter, and after the delay of about ten minutes, they began to wonder who Lord William could be waiting for, when all at once the door was once more thrown open, and the chamberlain announced in a loud voice:

"M. George Munier!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen in the midst of this assembly, it would most certainly not have produced a greater effect than did this simple announcement. At the sound of this name every one turned towards the door, wondering who it was that was about to enter; for although the name was a well known one in the Isle of France, he who bore it had for so long a period been an exile from his country, that even his very existence had been almost forgotten.

George entered.

The young mulatto was dressed with simplicity, but

at the same time with excellent taste. His admirably fitting black coat, from the button-hole of which hung at the end of a gold chain the two little crosses with which he had been decorated, enhanced the elegance of his figure. His half-tight pantaloons displayed the form, at the same time slender and perfect in its proportions, peculiar to men of colour, and contrary to their usual custom, he wore no articles of jewellery save a fine gold chain, similar to that at his button-hole, the end of which alone appeared as it partly crossed his chest and disappeared in the pocket of his white waist-coat. A black silk handkerchief, tied with that air of studied negligence only acquired by mingling in the circles of fashionable life, over which was folded a rounded shirt collar, harmonized with his handsome features, whose pallid hue was still further enhanced by his jet black moustache, and his long dark hair.

Lord William Murray went further to meet George than he had done for any other guest, and having taken him by the hand, presented him to several ladies and to five or six English officers who were in the room, as a fellow-voyager with whom he had had the good fortune to meet, and whose delightful society had made the voyage most agreeable. Then turning round towards the rest of the company:

"Gentlemen," said he, "to you I need not present M. George Munier. M. George Munier is your fellow-countryman, and the return of so distinguished a man to his native shores, ought to be almost a national festival."

George bowed his thanks, but notwithstanding the respect due to the Governor of the island, particularly in his own house, one or two voices only were heard to mutter a few words in reply to the Governor's presentation. Lord William Murray however appeared not to notice this silence, and as the domestic at this moment announced that dinner was on the table, he took Sara's arm, and led the way to the dining-room.

Keeping in view the well known character of George,

it may be easily imagined that it was not unintentionally he had allowed himself thus to be waited for. Upon the eve of entering into a conflict with a prejudice which he was firmly resolved to conquer, he wished in the first instance to place himself face to face with his enemy. In this he had succeeded to his utmost wishes, as the announcement of his name and his subsequent entry had produced all the effect he had either expected or desired.

But the person the most affected of all this honourable assembly was, without contradiction, Sara. Well aware that the young sportsman of the Black River had arrived at Port Louis with Lord William Murray, she had accordingly anticipated meeting him at the dinner party; and in all probability it was with the intention of pleasing the new arrival from Europe, that she had adopted in her toilet that elegant simplicity, so highly appreciated with us, and which, it must be confessed, is too often replaced in the colonies by a display of profuse and exaggerated ostentation. On first entering the room, therefore, she had looked around in expectation of seeing the young stranger. A single glance had sufficed to convince her that he was not there. She then imagined that he was yet to come, and that as he would be announced, she would doubtless learn in this manner both who he was and what was his name.

Sara's expectations were fully realized; for, as we have seen, scarcely had she taken her place in the circle of ladies, and MM. de Malmedie had mingled with the scattered groups of men, when M. George Munier was announced by the chamberlain.

At this name so well known in the isle, but which it was so unusual to hear pronounced under similar circumstances, Sara trembled with a sort of presentiment, and turning round full of anxiety, saw in fact the young stranger of Port Louis, with his firm and manly carriage, his placid brow, his haughty glance, and his lips half parted with a disdainful smile; and let us hasten to say, at this third appearance, he seemed in her eyes to

be handsomer and more romantic than he had been on either of the two former occasions.

Then she followed, not only with her eyes, but with her whole heart, the presentation of George to the company by Lord William Murray; and her heart throbbed when the repulsion caused by the birth of the young mulatto was manifested by the dead silence of the guests. It was with eyes almost swimming with tears, that she returned the rapid and penetrating glance which George had directed towards her.

At this moment Lord William offered her his arm, and she saw no more; for feeling herself turning red and pale alternately under George's glance, and convinced moreover, that the eyes of the company were fixed upon her, she hastened to escape for the moment from the general gaze. Upon this point, however, Sara deceived herself; no one had thought of her, for all, with the exception of M. de Malmedie and his son, were ignorant of the events which had recently brought the two young people in contact; and no one could imagine that there was anything in common between Mademoiselle Sara de Malmedie and M. George Munier.

Once seated at table, Sara hazarded a glance around her. She was seated on the right of the governor, who had on his left the lady of the commander of the forces; in front of her was the commander himself, placed between two ladies belonging to the highest families in the island. On the right and left of these two ladies were placed MM. de Malmedie, father and son, and so on with the remainder of the company. As to George, whether by chance or the good-natured foresight of Lord William Murray, he was placed between two Englishwomen.

Sara breathed more freely: she knew that the prejudice which pursued George in his native land, possessed no influence on the minds of foreigners, and that it required a long residence in the island to cause an inhabitant of Europe to adopt it; consequently she beheld George sustaining, with easy and gentleman-like

politeness, the character of a gay and well-bred guest, between the cross-fire of smiles of the two country-women of Lord William Murray, who were enchanted at having found a neighbour who spoke their language as if he had been born in England.

While glancing round towards the centre of the table, Sara perceived that Henri's eyes were fixed upon her. She understood perfectly what was passing in the mind of her betrothed, and by an involuntary movement, she lowered her eyes to the table, blushing deeply.

Lord William Murray was a nobleman in all the force of the term; admirably skilled in all the duties of a host, a character so difficult to acquire, when it is not prompted by instinct, and practised and matured by early habit. Consequently, when that feeling of reserve and constraint which usually accompanies the first course of a state banquet, was partly dissipated, he began to converse with his guests in general; speaking to each on the subjects with which he was most conversant; recalling to the minds of the English officers some famous battle, to the merchant some capital speculation; while from time to time he would address a remark to George, which proved that to him he could speak on all topics, and that in his case it was to a generally well-informed mind, and not to one merely conversant with commercial or military subjects, that he addressed himself.

The dinner passed over in this manner. Although naturally modest and retiring, George, gifted with a brilliant and cultivated mind, had replied to every observation and question of the governor, in a manner which proved to the officers that he had, like them, fought "in the tented field," and to the merchants that he had not remained a stranger to the great commercial interests which make of the entire world one great family, united together by the bonds of mutual interest. Then, in the midst of this detached conversation, were heard the names of all those who, whether in France, England,

or Spain, at that time occupied a high position in politics, in rank, or in the arts; each accompanied by one of those remarks which indicate, by a single trait, that he who speaks, does so with an entire knowledge of the character, genius, or position of the men whom he has named.


Although these scraps of conversation had passed, if we may so express ourselves, above the heads of most of the guests, there were among those invited, several men sufficiently well informed to comprehend the superior intellect with which George had touched upon all subjects; consequently, although the feeling of repulsion which had been manifested for the young mulatto remained almost the same, the general astonishment had increased, and with it, in the hearts of some, jealousy also had found an entrance. Henri, above all, pre-occupied with the idea that Sara had remarked George rather more than in her position of *fiancée*, and in her dignity of birth, she ought to have done, felt a sensation of bitterness, of which he was not master, rankling at the bottom of his heart. At the name of Munier, too, the recollections of his boyish days had occurred to his mind, and he recalled to memory the day when, endeavouring to wrench the colours from George's grasp, his brother Jacques had given him so violent a blow in the face. All these old grudges lay smouldering in his bosom, and the idea that Sara's life had been preserved but the evening before by this very man, in place of silencing the accusing murmurs of the past, served only to augment still further his hatred. As to the elder M. de Malmedie, he had been during the whole of the dinner engaged in a profound dissertation with his neighbour upon a new method of refining sugar, which would add a full third more in value to the produce of his estates than they had before been capable of realizing; consequently, after the first feelings of astonishment at finding in George the preserver of his niece, and in meeting him at Lord William Murray's table, were

over, he had troubled his head no more about the matter.

But, as we have said, this was not the case with Henri. Henri had not lost a single word of the conversation of Lord William Murray and the replies of George. In each of these replies he had recognised an upright mind and a superior intellect. He had studied the firm and steady glance, the unerring interpreter of George's absolute will, and he felt convinced that it was no longer, as on the day of his departure, an oppressed and sickly infant who was before him, but a powerful antagonist who came openly to brave his attack.

Had George on his return to the Isle of France, once more entered humbly into the condition for which, in the eyes of the whites, Nature had formed him, and thus been lost in the obscurity of his birth, Henri would never have remarked him, or even had he done so, would not have borne him malice for the wrongs which, twenty years before, he had suffered at his hands. But the case was the very reverse of all this: the proud young man had returned in broad day-light, and had mixed himself up, by means of the service he had rendered, with the private life of his family; he had come as his equal in rank and his superior in intellect, to seat himself at the same table with him. This was more than Henri could endure, and the young man mentally declared war against his antagonist. Therefore on leaving the table, as the guests were passing into the garden, Henri approached Sara who with several other ladies was seated under a bower opposite to that in which the gentlemen were taking coffee. Sara trembled, for she felt instinctively that in what her cousin was about to say to her, George would assuredly form the principal subject.

"Well, my fair cousin," said the young man, leaning over the back of the bamboo chair which served the young girl as a seat, "what did you think of the dinner?"



"It is not, I presume, with regard to the bill of fare that you ask me the question," replied Sara, with a smile.

"No, my sweet cousin; although perhaps for some, of the guests, who unlike you do not live on the morning dew, on air, or the perfumes of flowers, it would not be an inappropriate question. No; I ask it in a social point of view, if I may so express myself."

"Oh! I thought it in excellent taste; Lord William Murray appeared to me to do the honours of his table admirably, and was, I fancied, as amiable as possible with every one."

"Yes, certainly; and therefore I was quite astonished that a man so distinguished and of such high breeding as he most undoubtedly is, would have ventured on the *inconvenance* he has been guilty of towards us."

"In what way?" demanded Sara, who knew what her cousin wished to arrive at, and who feeling in her heart a power hitherto unknown to herself, looked steadfastly at her cousin as she addressed him.

"Why," replied Henri, a little embarrassed, not only at the firmness of her gaze, but also at the secret voice which whispered to his conscience, "why, in inviting M. George Munier to the same table with us."

"And, for my part, there is a thing which is no less astonishing to me, Henri; and that is, that you of all others should have addressed this observation to me."

"And pray why should this observation be interdicted to me alone, my dear cousin?"

"Simply because had it not been for this M. George Munier, whose presence here appears so improper to you, both you and your father would have been—that is, supposing one weeps for a cousin and a niece—this very day in mourning and in tears."

"Yes certainly," replied Henri, colouring deeply; "yes, yes, I fully comprehend the debt of gratitude we owe to M. George for having saved a life so precious as yours; and yesterday you might have seen that when

he desired to purchase those two negroes whom my father was going to have punished, I hastened to present them to him."

"And so, for the gift of these two negroes, you believe yourself acquitted of all obligation towards him? I thank you, cousin, for estimating the life of Sara de Malmedie at the sum of a thousand piastres."

"*Mon Dieu!* my dear cousin," exclaimed Henri, "what a strange manner of interpreting things you have to-day! Can you imagine that I had for one moment the idea of putting a price upon a life for which I would willingly give my own? No; I merely intended to point out to you in what a false position, for example, Lord William Murray would place the lady whom M. George Munier might ask to dance?"

"According to your opinion, then, my dear Henri, the lady ought to refuse."

"Without doubt."

"Without reflecting that in refusing she would offer to a man who has said or done nothing to offend her, but who on the contrary has perhaps even rendered her some slight service, one of those insults for which he has a reasonable right to demand an explanation from her father, brother, or husband."

"I presume that in such a case M. George would fall back upon himself, and would do us the justice of recalling to mind, that a white man does not condescend to place himself on a level with a mulatto."

"Pardon me, cousin, for daring to give utterance to an opinion in such a matter," rejoined Sara; "it may be that from the little I have seen of M. George, I have ill understood him, but I do not think that on a point which so nearly concerned his honour, a man who like him wears two crosses upon his breast, would permit himself to be restrained by that feeling of inferiority with which you, I fear rather gratuitously, invest him."

"In any case I trust, my dear Sara," replied Henri, the blush of anger on his cheek, "that the fear of ex-

posing either my father or myself to the anger of M. George Munier, will not induce you to commit the imprudence of dancing with him, even supposing he has the assurance to ask you?"

"I shall dance with no one, sir," replied Sara coldly, rising from her seat as she spoke, and crossing over to one of the two English ladies who had been seated next George at the dinner table, and who was one of her friends.

Henri remained for an instant almost stunned by an exhibition of firmness he had so little expected to meet with. Then after a few moments he turned on his heel, and proceeded to join a party of young Creoles, in whose breasts he in all probability found more sympathy for his aristocratic ideas, than he had done in that of his cousin. During this time, George, the centre of another group, conversed with a party of English officers and merchants, who did not share, or at least in a very slight degree, the prejudices of his fellow-countrymen.

An hour passed over in this manner, during which time all the preparations for the ball had been made. The doors were then again thrown open, and disclosed to view the suite of state apartments, stripped of most of their furniture, and blazing with lights. At the same instant the orchestra struck up, giving the signal for the dance.

It was not without a violent effort that Sara had condemned herself to the pain of seeing her companions dance without taking part in their amusement, for as we have said, she passionately loved dancing; but all the bitterness of her sacrifice was visited upon him who had been the cause of it, whilst on the contrary a deeper and more tender sentiment than any she had ever before experienced, began to arise in her heart in favour of him for whom she had imposed it on herself: for it is one of the noble qualities of women, whom nature and society alike have rendered doubly weak, to feel a powerful interest for all who are oppressed, as

well as a deep admiration for those who resist oppression.

Accordingly when Henri, in hopes that his cousin would be unable, despite her previously expressed determination, to resist the allurements of a first *ritournelle*, advanced to ask her according to custom to dance the first *contre-danse* with him, Sara contented herself with replying quietly:—

“You know that I do not intend to dance this evening, cousin.”

Henri bit his lip until the blood started, while by an instinctive movement his eyes sought George. George had taken his place in the set, and was now dancing with the English lady he had taken into dinner. From a feeling which however had nothing in common with that which had actuated her cousin, Sara’s eyes took the same direction, and a pang shot through her heart.

George was dancing with another. George thought not perhaps of Sara, who for his sake had made a sacrifice which the evening before she would not have believed herself capable of making for any man in the world. The time occupied in this dance was one of the most painful moments that Sara had ever experienced.

The dance being concluded, Sara despite herself could not prevent her eyes from following the figure of George. He proceeded to lead the Englishwoman to her seat again, then appeared to seek some one in the crowd. The individual he sought was Lord William Murray. Scarcely had he caught sight of him, than he hastened to join him, spoke a few words in a low tone of voice, and both advanced towards Sara.

Sara felt all the blood in her body rush towards her heart.

“*Mademoiselle*,” said Lord William Murray, “I beg to present to you a fellow-voyager, who entertaining perhaps rather too great a respect for our European customs, dares not venture to ask you to dance before

having made your acquaintance. Will you therefore allow me to introduce to you M. George Munier, one of the most distinguished men I have the honour of knowing."

"As you remark, my Lord," replied Sara, in a voice which by a powerful effort she had rendered almost firm, "this is on the part of M. George a needless ceremony, for we are already old acquaintances. On the day of his arrival, M. George rendered me a service; yesterday he did still more, he saved my life."

"What! the young chasseur who had the happiness to be on the spot in time to fire upon that frightful shark, whilst you were bathing, was M. George?"

"He himself, my lord," replied Sara, blushing deeply with shame, for it only then occurred to her that George had seen her in her swimming costume, "and during the whole of yesterday I was so much agitated, that I had scarcely strength sufficient to thank M. George as he deserved. But to-day I renew my thanks with all the more gratitude, that it is to his address and presence of mind I owe the happiness of being present at your delightful ball."

"And permit us also to add ours," said Henri, who had approached the little group of which his cousin formed the centre, "for we also were so much agitated by this accident, that we had scarcely the honour of saying a few words to M. George."

George, who had not yet uttered a syllable, but whose penetrating eyes had read to the depths of Sara's heart, bowed his acknowledgments, but without otherwise replying to Henri.

"In that case, I trust that the request which M. George is about to make will not now require my support," said Lord William Murray; "and I shall consequently leave my *protégé* to explain himself."

"Will Mademoiselle de Malmedie grant me the honour of a contre-danse?" said George, bowing a second time.

"O monsieur," replied Sara, "I am truly sorry,

but I trust and hope you will excuse me. I have but just now refused my cousin the same request, as I do not intend to dance this evening."

George smiled with the air of a man who comprehends fully, and drew himself up to his full height, casting upon Henri a glance so perfectly disdainful that Lord William Murray at once perceived, as well by this glance as by that with which M. de Malmedie replied to it, that a deep and inveterate hatred existed between these two men. But he carefully kept this discovery to himself and appeared as if he had not remarked anything.

"Can it be the remains of your alarm of yesterday," said he to Sara, "that now re-acts upon your pleasures of to-night?"

"Yes my lord," replied Sara; "I really feel so ill that I was just about to request my cousin Henri to tell M. de Malmedie that I wish to retire, and that I reckon on his kindness to bring me home."

Both Henri and Lord William started forward at the same moment, to fulfil the young girl's desire. George leaned forward quickly:

"You have a noble heart, mademoiselle," said he, in a voice audible only to her whom he addressed, "and I thank you."

Sara started, and was about to reply when Lord William Murray again approached, and almost in spite of herself she could only exchange a glance with George.

"Are you then still decided upon leaving us, mademoiselle?" said the governor.

"Alas! yes," replied Sara. "I should much like to remain, my lord, but—but, I am really ill."

"In that case I feel that it would be selfishness in me to endeavour to detain you, and as your carriage in all probability has not yet arrived, I shall give orders to have horses put to one of mine."

And Lord William Murray hurried off to give the necessary directions.

"I said George, "when I left Europe to return

to my native land, my sole desire was to find here a heart like yours, but I hardly dared to hope for that happiness."

"Monsieur," murmured Sara, overcome despite herself by the deep and thrilling accents of George's voice, "I know not what you mean."

"I mean to say, that, from the first moment of my arrival, I have been lulled in a delightful dream, and if this dream be ever realized I shall be the happiest of men."

Then without waiting Sara's reply, George bent low, and seeing M. de Malmedie and his son approaching, he resigned Sara to the care of her uncle and cousin.

Five minutes afterwards, Lord William Murray returned to announce that the carriage was ready, and offered Sara his arm, to cross the saloon. On reaching the door, the young girl cast one last glance of regret back towards that ball from which she had promised herself so much pleasure, and disappeared.

On his return from conducting Mademoiselle Malmedie to her carriage, the governor encountered in the ante-chamber George, who was in his turn preparing to quit the ball.

"And you, also?" said Lord William Murray.

"Yes, my lord. You are aware that I am staying for the present at Moka, and that I have consequently nearly eight leagues to ride to-night; happily, however, with Bayard that will be but the affair of an hour or so."

"Nothing of any consequence, I trust, has passed between M. Henri de Malmedie and yourself?" inquired the governor, with an expression of interest.

"No, my lord, not as yet," replied George, with a smile; "but in all probability what you anticipate is not far distant."

"Either I am very much deceived, my young friend," said the governor, "or the cause of your enmity with this family is of long standing."

"Yes, my lord; but after all they were but childish squabbles, which have grown into feelings of hatred and aversion—mere scratches which will become sabre cuts."

"Is there no means of arranging this affair?"

"I had hoped so for a moment, my lord; I imagined that fourteen years of British sway had destroyed the prejudice I have returned to combat, but it appears that I have been mistaken, and there only remains, therefore, for the gladiator to anoint himself with oil, and descend into the arena."

"Will you not meet with more wind-mills than giants in your career, my dear Don Quixotte?"

"I leave you to judge for yourself," replied George, with a smile. "Yesterday I saved the life of Mademoiselle Sara de Malmedie. How think you did her cousin requite his obligations to me to-day?"

"I cannot imagine. How?"

"By forbidding her to dance with me."

"Impossible."

"It is exactly as I have the honour of telling you, my lord."

"And for what reason, pray?"

"Because I am a mulatto."

"And what do you intend to do?"

"I?"

"Pardon my indiscretion, but you know the interest I feel for you; and besides we are old friends."

"What do I think of doing?" said George, with a smile.

"Yes; you must have fixed on some plan of conduct."

"This very evening I have formed one."

"And what is it? Come tell me, and I will in return tell you if it meets with my approval."

"Simply this, that in three months hence I shall be the husband of Mademoiselle Sara de Malmedie."

And before Lord William Murray had time to reply, George had bowed his farewell and disappeared. At the door, his Moorish servant awaited him with his two Arabian horses. George sprang upon the back of Bayard, and at a hard gallop took the road to Moka. On his arrival at home, the young man inquired for his father, but learned that he had gone out at seven o'clock in the evening, and had not yet returned.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SLAVER.

ON the following morning Pierre Munier entered the bed-chamber of his son at an early hour. Since his arrival in the island, George had several times gone over the magnificent estate belonging to his father, and with his ideas of European agriculture, he had struck out several plans of improvement, which, with his practical capacity, his father had at once comprehended; but these ideas rendered necessary the application of an increased number of hands; and the abolition of the public traffic had so enhanced the price of slaves, that there were no means left, without incurring enormous expense, of procuring, in the entire island, the fifty or sixty negroes which the father and son wished to add to their establishment. Pierre Munier had therefore, during the absence of his son on the previous evening, hailed with joy the news that a slaver was in sight, and according to the custom at that time adopted by the colonists and traffickers in negro flesh, he had proceeded during the night to the coast, in order to reply to the signals made by the slaver, with corresponding ones indicating that there were parties on shore willing to treat with him. These signals had been exchanged, and Pierre Munier now came to announce the good news to his son George. It was settled, therefore, that in the evening the father and son should proceed together to the Pointe-aux-Caves, below the Little Malabar. This arrangement made, Pierre Munier left home according to his daily custom to inspect the works on the plantation, and according to his custom also, George took his fowling-piece, and gained the woods in order to abandon himself to the full enjoyment of his reveries.

What George had said the evening before when taking leave of Lord William Murray, was not a mere

piece of idle bombast, but on the contrary a settled resolution. The study of the young mulatto's whole life had been, as we have seen, constantly directed towards this point; namely, to give to his will the strength and perseverance of true genius. Having attained to a superiority in everything which supported by his wealth, would have assured him in France or England, in London or Paris, a distinguished position in society, George, eager for the struggle, had hastened to return to the Isle of France. It was there that the prejudice which his courage believed itself destined to combat, existed in full force. He returned, therefore, having on his side the advantage of remaining incognito, and being able to study his enemy's position without the latter being aware that war had been declared against him, and holding himself in instant readiness to seize the favourable moment when he should be least expected, to commence that combat in which either a man or an opinion was to fall.

When George first placed his foot upon the shore of his native land, and found there the same men whom he had left on his departure, he felt the truth of a fact which sometimes in Europe he had doubted; namely, that affairs were in the same position in the Isle of France, although fourteen years had elapsed, although the island, instead of being French, was English, and in place of being called the Isle of France, had been re-named the Mauritius. From that day, therefore, he had put himself on his guard, and prepared himself for that moral duel which he had come to seek, as one prepares himself for a physical duel, if we may so speak; and, sword in hand, he awaited the fitting opportunity to deal his adversary the first blow. But, like Cæsar Borgia, whose commanding genius at the period of his father's death had prepared all his plans for the conquest of Italy, and had foreseen every circumstance except that at this epoch he would himself be a dying man, George found himself engaged in a manner he had not foreseen, and stricken at the very moment that he sought to strike. On the day of his arrival at Port Louis, chance had

thrown in his way a beautiful young girl, the recollection of whom, despite himself, still haunted his memory. Then again Providence had made him the instrument of saving the life of her of whom his imagination had vaguely dreamt since the moment he had first beheld her, so that this dream had penetrated still deeper into his existence. To crown all, fatality had re-united them the previous evening, and then a single glance had informed him at the very moment when he himself felt that he loved that he was also loved in return. From that moment the conflict assumed a new interest for him—an interest in which his happiness was closely bound up in double ties, since from henceforth this battle would be waged not only for the triumph of his pride, but also for that of his love. However, as we have said, wounded himself at the moment of the combat, George lost the advantage he would otherwise have derived from his coolness and self-possession. It is true that in exchange for this loss he gained the vehemence of passion.

But if upon a heart withered and blasé as that of George, the sight of the young girl had produced the impression we have alluded to, how much more vivid must have been that produced upon the youthful existence and virgin heart of Sara by the aspect of the young man, taking into consideration the circumstances under which he had successively appeared? Brought up in the house of M. de Malmedie from the day on which she had lost her parents, destined from that moment to double by her portion the fortune of the heir of the family, she had accustomed herself to regard Henri as her future husband, and she had so much the more easily reconciled herself to this prospect, as Henri was a fine handsome fellow, and esteemed as one of the richest and most elegant young men, not only in Port Louis but in the entire island. As to the other young men, Henri's friends, her cavaliers in the chase or her partners in the dance, she had known them too long for the idea to occur to her now of distinguishing by her

favour any one of them in particular: they were, for Sara, friends of her youth, and as such destined to accompany her tranquilly in the same capacity during the rest of her life; and that was all.

Sara was therefore in a state of perfect quietude of mind when for the first time she saw George. To a young girl, the appearance of a handsome and unknown young man of elegant figure and polished address is everywhere an event, and, as it may easily be conceived, especially so in the Isle of France.

The features of the young stranger, the tone of his voice, the words which he had spoken, had therefore without her knowing why, dwelt in Sara's memory, as an air which we have heard but once, sometimes despite ourselves, haunts our thoughts. Had Sara seen this young man again under ordinary circumstances, she would, doubtless, after the lapse of a few days, have altogether forgotten this little event; perhaps even a closer examination, such as that which a second meeting leads to, in place of mingling this young man's existence more deeply with her own, might have separated them altogether. But it had not been so destined. Providence had so willed it that they should meet for the second time under trying circumstances: the scene of the Black River had taken place. To the curiosity which had accompanied his first appearance were now added the grateful and romantic feelings which had attended the second. In an instant George had become transformed in the eyes of the young girl.

The unknown stranger had become a liberating angel. All the horror which such a death would have caused Sara, George had spared her; all that life at sixteen years of age had promised of future pleasure and happiness, George had restored to her at the very moment she was about to lose it for ever. And then when, having scarcely seen him, scarcely addressed a single word to him, she had found herself face to face with him, and would have given utterance to all those feelings of gratitude that swelled within her bosom, they

had forbidden her to grant him a favour which she would have accorded to the first comer; and, still more, they had compelled her to offer him an insult she would not have offered to the basest of men. Then it was, that those feelings of gratitude which she had been forced to bury within her heart, had changed to love. A glance had told George all, and a word from George had whispered all to Sara. Sara had been unable to deny any thing. George had therefore the right of believing all. Then after the impression had come reflection. Sara could not help comparing the conduct of Henri, her future husband, with that of the stranger who was not even a simple acquaintance. On the first day of their meeting, Henri's ill-timed jesting had hurt her feelings. The indifference also displayed by the latter, in hastening off to be in at the death of the stag, when his future bride had but just escaped so dreadful a fate, had wounded her to the heart; and then, to crown all, the tone of command in which he had spoken on the night of the ball, had offended her pride; so that, during this long evening, which might have been so happy a one, but which Henri had rendered so sad and solitary, Sara had, for the first time perhaps, closely interrogated her heart and for the first time also had felt convinced that she did not love her cousin. From that conclusion to the certainty that she loved another, was but a step.

Then occurred what generally does occur under similar circumstances. Sara after having examined her own heart, then cast her eyes around her. She weighed in the balance of interest the conduct of her uncle towards her; she recalled to mind that she possessed a fortune of nearly a million and a half of francs, that is to say, that she was nearly twice as rich as her cousin; she asked herself if her uncle would have had the same tender care and affection for the poor orphan as he now professed for the wealthy heiress, and she felt unable to see anything more disinterested in the adoption of her by M. de Malmedie than what there really was; that is to say, the calculation of a worldly-minded

father seeking a good connexion for his son. All this was doubtless rather severe, but affection and confidence once wounded, gratitude disappears through the wound, and the pain which remains becomes a severe and rigorous judge.

George had foreseen all this, and had reckoned upon it as a means of forwarding his suit, and of lessening the claims of his rival to the young girl's affections. Consequently after deep and mature reflection, he resolved to make no further movement that day, although he secretly burned to behold Sara again. It was in pursuance of this resolution that he had left home with his gun on his shoulder, hoping to find in the amusement of shooting, his favourite sport, some excitement which would enable him to get through the day. But George deceived himself; his love for Sara already murmured in his heart with a voice which drowned every other sentiment. Consequently towards four o'clock in the afternoon, no longer able to resist his feverish desire, we will not say to see the young girl (for, unable to present himself at the house it would be only by the merest chance that he could hope to catch a glimpse of her), but to be near her, he ordered Saladin to be saddled, and giving the rein to the fleet child of Arabia, he found himself in less than an hour in the capital of the island.

George had come to Port Louis with but one hope, but as we have said this hope was entirely dependant on chance. On this occasion however fortune proved inflexible. In vain did George pass through all the streets in the vicinity of M. de Malmedie's house; in vain did he twice cross the company's garden, the usual promenade of the inhabitants of Port Louis; in vain did he thrice make the circuit of the Champs de Mars, where all was in preparation for the approaching races; nowhere, even at a distance, could he discover a female form which could cheat him into the illusion that he beheld his lady-love.

At seven o'clock George lost all hope, and sick at

heart as though suffering from some dreadful misfortune, and his body aching as though he had undergone excessive fatigue, he retraced his steps towards the Great River, but this time curbing his impatient steed to a walk, for he was now leaving Sara behind—Sara who was doubtless in ignorance that ten times had her lover passed through the Rue de la Comédie and the Rue du Gouvernement, at a distance of scarcely a hundred paces from her. He was crossing the camp of the free negroes, which is situated without the city, still restraining the ardour of Saladin who was utterly unable to account for this unaccustomed proceeding of his master's, when all at once a man issued forth from one of the wooden huts which lined the road, and darting forward to his stirrup embraced his knees, and repeatedly kissed his hand. It was the Chinese pedlar, the proprietor of the fan, Miko-Miko.

Immediately a vague idea occurred to George of the use which could be made of this man, whose trade gave him an introduction to every house, and whose ignorance of the language would cause no distrust.

George therefore dismounted, and entered the shop of Miko-Miko, who insisted upon displaying to him his choicest treasures. No one could have been deceived in the gratitude which the poor fellow entertained for George, and which indeed was expressed in every word he uttered. The cause may be easily explained: Miko-Miko had not yet discovered in Port Louis a single individual who spoke his language, with the exception of two or three fellow-countrymen, pedlars like himself, and consequently if not his enemies at least his rivals. He accordingly besought George to tell him in what manner he could acquit himself of the debt of gratitude and happiness he owed him.

The favour which George had to ask in return was a very trifling one; it was merely a plan of the interior of M. de Malmedie's house, in order that he might, should it be necessary, be acquainted with the position of Sara's apartments.

At the first words which George uttered, Miko-Miko comprehended all. We mentioned that the Chinese were the Jews of the Isle of France.

In order, however, to facilitate Miko-Miko's negotiations with Sara, and perhaps also with another intention, George wrote on one of his visiting cards the prices of the different articles which would be most likely to tempt the young beauty's fancy, charging Miko-Miko to permit no one to see this card but Sara herself. He then gave the pedlar a second quadruple, enjoining him to be at Moka towards three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day. Miko-Miko promised to be faithful to his appointment, and also engaged to carry in his head a plan of the house, as exact as if it had been traced by an engineer. Then as it was now eight o'clock, and as George was to be with his father at the Pointes-aux-Caves at nine, he remounted his horse, and with a lighter heart took the road which led to the Little River; so slight a thing will change the colour of a lover's horizon.

It was night-fall when George reached the place of meeting. His father, according to the habit which he had contracted in his dealings with the whites of being always in advance, had already been ten minutes on the spot. At half-past nine the moon rose. This was the moment for which George and his father waited. Their eyes were simultaneously directed to a spot between the Isle Bourbon and the Isle de Sable, and there three times successively they saw a gleam of light sparkle. It was the moon's rays, which were according to the usual custom reflected from a mirror. At this signal, well known to the colonists, Telemachus who accompanied his masters lighted a fire upon the beach, which five minutes afterwards he extinguished. Then they waited.

Half an hour had scarcely elapsed ere they saw approaching the shore a faintly marked black line like some huge fish swimming near the surface of the water; then after a few minutes the line grew larger, and gradually

assumed the appearance of a canoe. Shortly afterwards they could make out the form of a large galley, and could distinguish by the gleam of the moon's rays upon the sea, the regular action of the oars as they dipped into the water, although the sound did not yet reach their ears. At length the boat entered the channel of the Little River, and her keel grated on the sand of the creek in front of the Petit-Fortin.

George and his father now advanced towards the shore. On his side, the man whom they had distinguished at some distance seated in the stern-sheets of the boat, had already sprung on shore.

Behind him marched a dozen of sailors armed with muskets and axes. The man who had first landed now made them a sign, and they began to disembark the negroes. There were thirty of these laid along the bottom of the boat, and a second galley was to bring an equal number.

The two mulattoes and the man who had first landed now advanced towards each other, and exchanged a few words. The result was, that George and his father were convinced of a fact of which they had been hitherto in doubt; namely, that they had before them the captain of the slave-ship in person.

He was a man of about thirty or two and thirty years of age, of lofty stature, and endowed with that degree of physical strength which naturally commands respect. He had black and curling hair, and large bushy whiskers growing beneath the chin and met by a pair of thick black moustaches; his face and hands, bronzed by a tropical sun, resembled in colour those of the Indians of Timor and Pegu. He was dressed in a vest and pantaloons of blue linen, peculiar to the sportsmen of the Isle of France, and like them wore a broad-brimmed straw hat, and carried a fowling-piece over his shoulder. In addition to this however, a carved sabre, something resembling in form an Arabian cymetar, but larger and having a basket-handle like those of the Scottish claymores, hung from his belt.

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If the captain of the slave-ship had been the object

of a close examination on the part of the two inhabitants of Moka, the latter on their part had undergone an inspection no less minute. The eyes of the trader in black flesh glanced from one to another with equal curiosity, and the more he examined them he seemed the less able to detach his eyes from their persons. Doubtless George and his father either did not notice this persevering scrutiny, or else considered that it was not calculated to inspire any feelings of uneasiness, for they at once entered upon the business for which they had come; examining minutely one after another the negroes which had been landed from the first boat, and which were almost all from the western coast of Africa; that is to say, from Senegambia and la Guidrie, a circumstance which considerably enhanced their value, as not having like the Madegasscans, the Mozambiques, and Kaffirs, the hope of regaining their country, they seldom attempted flight. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the captain was very reasonable in his terms, and by the time the second boat load had been landed, the bargain was already concluded for the first.

This cargo was very similar to the other. The captain had made an admirable assortment, and had shown himself a perfect adept in the trade. His visit was a piece of real good fortune for the Isle of France, where he had come for the first time to exercise his traffic, having previously loaded almost exclusively for the West Indies.

When all the negroes had been landed, and the bargain finally concluded, Telemachus, who was himself a native of Congo, approached and began a long harangue in his native tongue, which was also theirs. This discourse extolled the happiness of their future life, compared to that which their fellow-countrymen led with the other planters of the island, and informed them that they had fallen into the hands of MM. Pierre and George Munier, the two best masters in the colony. The negroes then approached the two mulattoes, and falling on their knees, promised through their interpreter, Telemachus, to render themselves worthy of the *happiness* which fortune had sent them.

At the names of Pierre and George Munier, the captain of the slaver, who had listened to the discourse of Telemachus with an air of attention which proved that he had made a particular study of the different dialects of Africa, started, and looked yet more attentively than before at the two men with whom he had just been treating for an affair of nearly a hundred and fifty thousand francs. But as on the first occasion, George and his father did not in the least appear to remark his close and careful scrutiny. At length nothing remained but to settle the transaction. George asked the slave captain how he wished to be paid, whether in gold or notes, his father having brought a supply of gold in his saddle-bags and letters of credit and bills in his pocket-book, in order to be prepared for all exigencies. The slave-dealer preferred gold. The sum was accordingly counted down on the spot and shipped on board the second boat, after which the sailors re-embarked. But to the great astonishment of George and his father, the captain did not accompany them to the boats, which upon an order given by him pushed off and left him standing alone on the shore.

The captain followed the boats for some time with his eyes, and at length, when they were completely out of sight and hearing, he turned towards the two amazed mulattoes, and grasping their hands in his, exclaimed: "Good morrow, father; Good morrow, brother;" then as they hesitated, "Well," added he, "do you not remember your Jacques?"

Both uttered a cry of surprise, and stretched out their arms to him. Jacques threw himself into those of his father. Then from his father's arms he passed to those of his brother, after which Telemachus had his turn also, although we must confess it was not without a shudder that he dared to touch the hand of a slave-dealer.

In fact, by a strange coincidence, chance had united together in the same family the man who had all his lifetime bent beneath the prejudice of colour, the man who made his fortune by trafficking in it, and the man who was prepared to risk his life, in order to overcome it.

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from a distance, they ended by exterminating each other broadside to broadside.

During this time the merchant ship would take to her heels, and if, like the ass in the fable, she fell in with no other privateer who laid hands upon her, would get safe into some British port, to the great satisfaction of the East India Company, who out of gratitude would grant a pension to her defenders. In this way did matters go on at the period of which we write. Of the thirty or thirty-one days of which the month was composed, they generally fought twenty or five and twenty. Then in order to give them a little repose after so much fighting, they had storms and tempests.

In a school like this we repeat pupils soon become apt scholars. First of all, as they had no conscription from which to recruit their forces, and as this little amateur war consumed in the long run a vast number of men, the crews were never complete. Consequently on days of battle or tempest, none had any fixed duty; each man was accustomed to all. It is true that as all the sailors were volunteers, quality in this case amply compensated for quantity. For the rest, passive obedience to the captain, and, during his absence, to the second in command, was the rule on board. During the last six years, there had indeed been on board the *Calypso* (the bark which Jacques had chosen to serve his nautical apprenticeship in, was so named) two mutineers, the one a Norman, and the other a Gascon, the former against the authority of the captain, the latter against that of the lieutenant. But the captain had split open the skull of the first with a hatchet, and the lieutenant had shot the second through the heart with a pistol bullet; both had fallen dead on the spot: after which, as nothing embarrasses the working of a ship so much as a dead body, they had thrown the corpses of the two unfortunates overboard, and there was no more said about them. These two events, however, though they left no traces save in the memory of the crew, had not the less exercised upon all minds

a most salutary influence; and no one from that time forth cared to seek a quarrel either with Captain Bertrand or his lieutenant, Rébard, who henceforth exercised without opposition the most despotic sway on board the Calypso.

Jacques had always had a decided taste for the sea. While still a child, he was constantly on board one or other of the ships in the roads of Port Louis, ascending the shrouds, clambering up the topmasts, running out on the yards, and gliding down by the back stays; and as it was more particularly on board those ships which were connected by trade with his father's house, that Jacques devoted himself to these gymnastic exercises, the captains were always most complaisant to him, satisfying his childish curiosity, explaining everything to him, and permitting him to range over the vessel at pleasure, from the hold to the main topgallant mast head. The natural result of all this was, that Jacques at the age of ten was a first rate sailor; as in default of shipping, every object represented in his imagination masts and spars. He climbed the loftiest trees, which he transformed into masts, and glided along the branches of the bamboos, which he metamorphosed into yards and rigging; and at twelve years of age, as he knew the names of every part of a ship, and was perfect master of all the manœuvres executed on board of one, he might, had his father so pleased, have entered on board any ship of war as first-class midshipman.

But as we have seen, his father had decided otherwise, and in place of sending him to the Ecole d'Angoulême, whither Jacques's tastes called him, he had entered him at the Collège Napoléon. It was then that a fresh confirmation of the proverb, *L'homme propose et Dieu dispose*, occurred. Jacques, after having passed two years in drawing ships upon the backs of his copy books, and in launching miniature frigates upon the great basin of the Luxembourg, profited by the first occasion which presented itself to pass from theory to practice, and having during his holidays at Brest chanced to pay a visit on

board the *Calypso*, he declared to his brother who accompanied him, that he might return on shore alone, but that for his part he, Jacques, had fully determined on becoming a sailor.

As Jacques had decided, so it came to pass, and George returned alone, as we have before related, to the Collège Napoléon.

As to Jacques, whose bold and manly bearing and open cheerful countenance had quite won the heart of Captain Bertrand, he was raised at once to the grade of able seaman, a promotion which caused much murmuring among his comrades.

Jacques let them murmur. He had in his own mind some very correct notions of the just and unjust. Those whose equal he had just been made, were ignorant of his real value. It was therefore reasonable enough that they should consider it very unfair to grant such a step to a mere novice; but in the very first storm by which they were assailed, Jacques sprang aloft to cut away a topgallant sail which an ill-made knot had prevented from slipping, and which threatened to carry away the spar to which it was attached; and in his first engagement he sprang on board the enemy's deck before the captain, which cost him so vigorous a blow of the fist from the latter, that for three days he did not recover its effects; it being the rule on board the *Calypso* that the captain should always touch the enemy's deck before any of his crew. However as this was a fault which one brave man readily forgives another, the captain accepted the excuses offered by Jacques, and replied that after himself and the lieutenant he was at perfect liberty to take rank where he chose. In the second engagement Jacques passed third.

In this position affairs remained until 1815—we say until 1815, because Captain Bertrand, who was of a very sceptical turn of mind upon certain points, could never be persuaded to consider the fall of Napoleon in a serious light. Perhaps also what tended to keep him in this opinion was, that having nothing to do he had made

two voyages to Elba, and that in one of these voyages he had had the honour of being presented to the emperor of the world. On what subject the Emperor and the privateer had conversed during this interview, for ever remained a profound secret. It was however remarked that Captain Bertrand returned on board humming to himself—

“Ran tan plan tirelire
Comme nous allons rire!”

which was with Captain Bertrand the sign of the highest inward satisfaction. Captain Bertrand then returned to Brest, where without saying a word to any one, he began to get the *Calypso* ready for service, got on board stores and ammunition, and recruited the few men he still wanted to complete his crew.

From these preparations it was very evident, even to those who knew Captain Bertrand least, that something was preparing behind the curtain, which would ere long astonish pit and gallery.

In fact, six weeks after the last voyage of Captain Bertrand to Porto Ferrajo, Napoleon landed in the Gulf of Juan. Twenty-four hours after his landing, Napoleon entered Paris, and seventy-two hours after this event Captain Bertrand stood out of Brest harbour, all sails set, and the tri-coloured flag flying from his peak.

Eight days had scarcely elapsed ere Captain Bertrand returned, towing after him a magnificent British merchant ship, laden with the choicest Indian spices, which had experienced so marvellous a degree of astonishment at seeing the tri-coloured flag, which it had believed had disappeared for ever from the surface of the globe; that it had not once dreamed of making the slightest resistance.

This prize made the mouth of the brave Captain Bertrand water; consequently he had no sooner disposed of ship and cargo, which he was enabled to do at a satisfactory price, and had divided the amount among

his crew, who had been lying idle for nearly a year and were thoroughly wearied of this state of inactivity, than he started again in quest of another merchant ship. But, as we all know, we do not always find what we seek. One fine morning, after a very dark night, the Calypso found herself face to face with an English frigate. This frigate was the Leicester; that is to say, the same ship which we have seen conveying to Port Louis the Governor and George.

The Leicester had ten guns and sixty men more than the Calypso, but carried not the slightest cargo of cinnamon, sugar, or coffee. To compensate for this, she had on board a well-stored magazine, and a perfect arsenal of shot and shell, ready prepared for the first comer. Scarcely had she seen however to what parish the Calypso belonged, than, without troubling herself the least in the world to call out, "Have a care!" she forwarded a specimen of her merchandise in the shape of a neat little thirty-six pound ball, which most unceremoniously buried itself in the hull of the Calypso.

The Calypso, the reverse of her sister Galatea who fled in order to be seen, would have been delighted to escape without being seen. There was nothing to be gained in a battle with the Leicester, even were she to prove victorious, which was not however in the slightest degree probable. Unfortunately, too, it was scarcely more probable to suppose that she should escape her enemy, the captain of the latter being that same William Murray, who had not at this period yet retired from the service, and who, with those charming manners to which his diplomatic labours subsequently added fresh attractions, was one of the most intrepid sea-wolves from the Straits of Magellan to Baffin's Bay.

Captain Bertrand accordingly shifted his two most powerful guns to the stern, and took to his heels as fast as he could.

The Calypso was a true bird of prey, built for running, of a long and narrow mould; but the poor sea-swallow had now to contend with the eagle of the ocean, so that, despite her agility, it was soon evident that the

frigate gained rapidly upon the brigantine. This superiority of sailing soon became so visible to all, that every five minutes the Leicester despatched a few iron messengers to summon the Calypso to surrender; to which polite invitations the Calypso did not fail to reply with her stern-chasers.

During this time, Jacques having examined with the greatest attention the spars of the brigantine, addressed some very sensible observations to Lieutenant Rébard on the subject of certain improvements which might be made with advantage in the rig of vessels destined, like the Calypso, to pursue or be pursued. There was, above all, in his opinion a radical change to be effected in the topgallant masts; and Jacques, his eyes fixed upon this weak point in the ship, had just concluded his demonstration, when, not receiving an approving reply from the lieutenant, he turned his eyes from heaven to earth, and discovered the cause of his companion's silence. Lieutenant Rébard had been cut in two by a cannon ball.

Their situation now became serious. It was evident that before half an hour had elapsed the two ships would be abreast of each other, and that it would be necessary to have a brush with a crew nearly one-third stronger than themselves. Jacques had communicated this agreeable intelligence, in a confidential way, to the captain of one of the stern-chasers, just as he was about to stoop down to correct his aim, when all at once the gunner appeared to make a false step, and fell forward with his face on the breech of the gun. Seeing that he was slower in getting on his legs again, than under similar circumstances a man charged with so important a duty ought to be, Jacques seized him by the collar of his jacket, and hauled him up into an erect position. But he then perceived that the poor fellow had swallowed a grape shot, only in place of following a perpendicular direction, the shot had taken a horizontal one: hence the accident. The poor gunner had died, as they say, of an indigestion of cold iron.

Jacques, who for the moment had nothing better to

do, stooped down in his turn to the piece, corrected by a line or two the aim, and then, allowing for the heave of the sea, cried, "Fire!" At the same moment the gun was discharged; and as Jacques was anxious to observe the effect and witness the result of his address, he jumped into the hammock-nettings to follow as well as he could the course taken by the projectile which he had just forwarded to the enemy.

The effect was electric. The mizenmast, cut a little above the shrouds, bent like a willow wand; then with a frightful crash down it came with all its accompanying hamper, encumbering the deck with sails, cordage, and fragments of spars, and carrying away in its fall a portion of the starboard bulwarks.

A loud shout of joy resounded on board the Calypso. The frigate was arrested in the middle of the chase, dipping her broken wing into the sea like a wounded water-fowl, while the brigantine safe and sound, with the exception of some slight damage done to her rigging, continued her course disembarassed of the pursuit of her enemy.

The captain's first care, when he saw himself out of danger, was to appoint Jacques lieutenant in place of the deceased Rébard. Jacques for a long time back having been considered in the minds of his comrades as the natural successor to the post, in case of vacancy, the official announcement of his promotion was greeted by general acclamations.

In the evening a mass was celebrated for the dead. They had thrown the bodies overboard as they fell in the chase, having kept only that of the second in command in order to render to it the honours due to its rank. These honours consisted in the corpse being sowed up in a hammock with a thirty-six pound shot at each foot. The ceremonial was exactly observed, and the body of poor Rébard was launched over the side and proceeded to rejoin its comrades, having over them but the very questionable advantage of sinking into the depths of the sea in place of floating upon its surface.

That night Captain Bertrand profited by the obscurity to double upon his pursuer, which manœuvre, thanks to a favourable change of wind, he was able to effect, so that he returned to Brest, while the Leicester, having quickly repaired damages, pursued him to the Cape Verd Islands.

This little adventure considerably ruffled the amiable temper of Captain Murray, who swore that if ever the Calypso should again come within range of the Leicester's guns, she should not escape quite so easily the second time as she had done the first.

After this adventure, Captain Bertrand having repaired damages again proceeded to sea, and seconded by Jacques, performed wonders. Unfortunately Waterloo came; after Waterloo, the second abdication and peace. The captain beheld the prisoner of Europe ascend the side of the Bellerophon, and as he knew St. Helena from having occasionally touched at it, he at once felt convinced that the captive could not possibly escape from thence as he had previously done from Elba.

In this universal cataclysm which upset all things, Captain Bertrand's future prospects were seriously compromised. It became necessary for him therefore to create a new trade. He was master of a tight, fast-sailing brigantine, manned by a crew of a hundred bold fellows, ready to follow him in good or ill fortune; so he naturally turned his thoughts to the slave-trade.

And a very pretty business was this same slave-trade before the philanthropists spoiled the market by their philosophical declamations, and many a good fortune was made by the earlier speculators. War, sometimes extinguished in Europe, rages for ever in Africa. In that happy land there are always some honest persons to be found afflicted with a constant thirst, and as the inhabitants have observed that the surest means of procuring French brandy is to make a great number of prisoners, it was only necessary, at this period, for an individual to coast along the shores

of Senegambia, Congo, Mozambique, or Zanguebar, a bottle of Cogniac in each hand, and he was sure to return to his ship with a negro under each arm. When prisoners failed, mothers sold their children for a glass of liquor; these youngsters, it is true, fetched no great price, but then there was always some compensation in the quantity.

Captain Bertrand pursued this traffic with honour and profit for the space of five years, that is to say, from 1815 until 1820, and indeed he reckoned upon exercising it for a considerable number of years longer, had not an unexpected event put an end to his existence. One day as he was proceeding along the bank of the Fish River, situated on the western coast of Africa, in company with a Hottentot chie who was to deliver over to him, for the consideration of two pipes of rum, a party of Namaquois for whom he had already had orders from Martinique and Guadaloupe, he chanced to place his foot upon the tail of a rattlesnake which was basking in the sun. This species of reptile is, as we know, so sensitive in the region of the tail, that Nature has placed at this spot an innumerable quantity of rattles, in order that, warned by the sound, the unwary traveller may not tread upon it. The rattlesnake drew itself up quick as lightning, and bit Captain Bertrand in the hand. Captain Bertrand, though in general very indifferent to pain, uttered a cry. The Hottentot chieftain turned round, saw what was the matter, and said gravely:

“Man bitten, man dead,”

“I know that well enough,” replied the captain, “and it was for that reason I cried out.”

Whereupon, either for his own personal satisfaction, or out of philanthropy, in order that the reptile which had bitten him should not serve any one else in the same way, he seized the rattlesnake by the neck with both hands and strangled it. But this execution was scarcely performed, when the brave captain's strength failed, and he sank to the ground beside his victim.

All this had passed so rapidly, that when Jacques, who was scarcely five and twenty paces in the rear of his commander, reached the spot, the latter was as green as a lizard. He endeavoured to speak, but could with difficulty mutter a few unconnected words, and almost instantly expired. Ten minutes afterwards his body was covered with black and yellow stripes like a poisonous fungus.

To carry the captain's body back to the Calypso was utterly out of the question, so rapid was the decomposition on account of the subtilty of the poison. Jacques and the twelve sailors who accompanied him accordingly dug a grave, laid the body of their commander in it, and by way of mausoleum, piled up over his remains all the stones they could find in the neighbourhood, in order to save them if possible from the devouring teeth of the hyenas and jackals. As to the rattlesnake, one of the sailors took charge of it, having fortunately recollected that his uncle, a chemist and druggist at Brest, had particularly enjoined him, should he ever fall in with one of these reptiles, to bring it home to him dead or alive, in order that he might put it into a bottle and exhibit it in his shop window.

There is a commercial adage which says, "Business before everything." In virtue of this proverb, it was therefore decided between the Hottentot chief and Jacques, that this catastrophe should in no wise be permitted to interfere with the due fulfilment of their bargain. Jacques accordingly proceeded to the neighbouring kraal for the fifty Namaquois already sold, after which the Hottentot chief came off in his turn to the brigantine to claim the two pipes of rum agreed on as payment. This exchange made, the two merchants separated, enchanted with each other and mutually promising that this should not be their last bargain.

That very evening, Jacques assembled all the sailors on deck, from the mate to the lowest cabin boy, and after a concise but eloquent discourse upon the numerous virtues which adorned Captain Bertrand, made two

propositions to the crew. The first was, to dispose of the cargo which was now complete, and after that the brigantine itself, which might easily be done, and after a fair division of the profits according to their established laws, to separate good friends and go and seek each his fortune elsewhere. The second was, to name a captain in the place of their deceased commander Bertrand, and to continue the trade under the firm of *Calypso and Company*, declaring beforehand, that lieutenant as he was, he would be perfectly willing to submit to a re-election, and would be the first to recognise the authority of whatever captain they should think fit to elect. At these words what might have been expected took place: Jacques was elected captain by general acclamation.

Jacques chose forthwith for second in command his mate, a brave Breton and a native of L'Orient, and who, in allusion to the remarkable hardness of his skull, was generally known among the crew under the appellation of Iron Head. That same evening the *Calypso*, more forgetful even than the nymph whose name she bore, made sail for the West Indies, already consoled, in appearance at least, not for the departure of king Ulysses but for the death of Captain Bertrand.

In fact, if she had lost one master she had found another who was certainly of equal value. The defunct was one of those old sea wolves who do everything according to routine, and never act from the inspiration of the moment. It was not thus however with Jacques. Jacques was ever the child of circumstances; a genius in everything which concerned the nautical art; fully able either in storm or battle to work his ship with the first admiral in the service, and on an occasion splicing a rope as well as the lowest cabin boy in the fleet. With Jacques there was no repose, consequently no weariness, or *ennui*. Every day brought along with it some alteration to be effected either in the stowage or the trim of the brigantine. Jacques loved the *Calypso* as a lover does his mistress, and was therefore constantly

occupied in making some addition to her toilette. At one time it was the bonnet of a sail whose form he changed, at another it was a yard the working of which he rendered more simple. So, coquette as she was, she obeyed her new lord and master as she had never yet obeyed mortal, curvetting proudly under his hand, bounding under his foot like a horse who feels the spur, in such wise that Jacques and the Calypso seemed so completely formed for one another, that no one could have an idea that from thenceforth they could possibly exist asunder.

Accordingly, except when the remembrance of his father and brother would occasionally cloud his brow for a moment, Jacques was the happiest fellow either afloat or ashore. He was not one of those greedy slavers who lose half their profit by seeking to gain too much, and whose cruelty after having grown habitual to them at last becomes their sole pleasure. No, he was a good honest merchant, trading conscientiously, and bestowing on his Kaffirs, his Hottentots, his Senegambians, and his Mozambiques, almost as much care as if they had been casks of sugar, sacks of rice, or bales of cotton. They were well fed, had clean straw to sleep on, and twice a day they were allowed on deck to breathe the fresh air. The refractory only were put in irons; and in general he endeavoured, as far as was in his power, to sell the husbands with their wives, and the children with their mothers, a circumstance which was considered as an unheard-of piece of delicacy, and which it must be confessed had few imitators among his companions. The consequence was, that Jacques's negroes almost invariably reached their destination gay and in excellent condition, which considerably enhanced their value in the market.

It may readily be supposed that Jacques never stopped long enough on shore to form any serious attachment. As he literally rolled in gold and silver, the lovely Creoles of Jamaica, Guadaloupe, and Cuba, had more than once cast eyes of affection upon him.

There had been even certain fathers who, ignorant that Jacques was a mulatto, had more than once made him overtures of marriage; but our friend Jacques had his own ideas with regard to love. Jacques knew his mythology and sacred history perfectly. He remembered the fable of Hercules and Omphale, nor was the history of Samson and Delilah altogether unknown to him. He had consequently decided that he would have no other bridle save the Calypso.

Then we must add that Jacques was as sensual as a Creole ever is. All the sublimities of Nature affected him agreeably, only in place of making an impression on his mind they acted upon his senses. He loved the immensity of space, not because this immensity made him think of his God, but rather because the greater the space the more freely could he breathe; he loved the stars, not because he thought that they might be so many worlds rolling in space, but simply because he delighted to have over his head an azure canopy embroidered with diamonds; he loved the vast forests, not because their depths were full of mysterious and poetical voices, but because their dense vault afforded a grateful shade from the ardent rays of the sun.

As to his view of the calling he followed, in his opinion it was a perfectly legal trade. He had all his life seen negroes bought and sold; he therefore conscientiously believed that negroes were made to be bought and sold. As to the validity of that right which man arrogates to himself of trafficking in his fellow-creatures, he did not trouble his head about the matter; he purchased and paid; the article was then his own; and from the moment he had so bought, he considered himself at perfect liberty to sell again. Jacques, however, had never once imitated the example of some of his fellow-slavers, whom he had seen negro-hunting on their own account. To take possession of the person of a free creature, whether by stratagem or violence, in order to make him a slave, Jacques would have regarded as a piece of frightful injustice; but from the

moment that this free creature, from circumstances over which he (Jacques) had no control, had become a slave, he saw no reason why he should not treat for him with his present proprietor.

As our readers may imagine, the life which Jacques now led was a decidedly agreeable one; and so much the more so, that he had occasionally his days of fighting. Since in the times of Captain Bertrand the slave-trade had been abolished by a Congress of Powers who had probably considered that it spoiled the trade in whites, it occasionally happened that certain ships, who *would* meddle in what did not concern them, absolutely wished to know what the Calypso was doing off the coasts of Senegal, or in the Indian Ocean. Then if it happened that Captain Jacques was in a good-humour, he would begin to amuse this over-curious ship by showing her a set of flags of all colours, and when tired of playing at riddles with her, he would hoist his own peculiar standard, which was three heads sable on a field gules. The Calypso would then take to her heels, and the game would begin.

In addition to the twenty pieces of cannon which ornamented her sides, the Calypso possessed, for these especial occasions, two stern-chasers each forty-eight pounders, the range of which surpassed that of those belonging to ordinary ships; so, as she was an excellent sailer, and implicitly obeyed both the eye and hand of her master, he would set so much sail upon her as was necessary to keep the pursuing ship within range of the two stern guns. The result was, that while the enemy's shot fell short of the mark, each ball sent from the Calypso—and it may be imagined that Jacques had not forgotten his old skill in gunnery—did vast execution on the pursuing vessel. This in general lasted as long as Jacques was pleased to carry on what he called his game of nine pins; after which, when he considered that the indiscreet ship was sufficiently punished for her indiscretion, he would clap all *sail on the brigantine*, setting stu'n-sails alow and

ast, and after having sent a couple of balls to his partner, in sign of adieu, would skim away over the waters like a bird seeking to regain its nest, and leaving her adversary to stop her shot-holes and repair her damaged spars and rigging, would finally disappear below the horizon.

These various escapades, as it may be imagined, rendered the entry of different ports a rather difficult matter for the Calypso. But then the Calypso was a coquette who could change her gait and even her visage, according to circumstances. At one time she would assume the virginal name and innocent appearance of the Pretty Jenny or the Young Olympia, and would present herself with a maiden-like simplicity delightful to behold. On these occasions she had come, as she said, to load with tea at Canton, coffee at Mocha, or spices at Ceylon. She would show specimens of her cargo, receive orders, and advertise for passengers. Captain Jacques was then an honest Breton peasant, with his great waistcoat, his long hair, and his broad-brimmed hat,—in short with the entire wardrobe of the defunct Bertrand. At another time the Calypso would change her sex,—would call herself the Sphinx or the Leonidas; her crew would clothe themselves in the uniform of the French navy, and she would enter the roadstead, the white ensign flying at her peak, courteously saluting the fort, which would as courteously return the compliment. Then her captain was, according to his fancy, either an old grumbling sea-wolf, cursing and swearing, speaking only in sea-slang, and ignorant of what use the land could be save for supplying him with fresh water and affording him a place to dry his fish on; or again, some fashionable young officer, fresh from college, on whom the government, in order to recompense the service of his ancestors, has conferred a command which ten or a dozen old officers had in vain solicited. In this case Captain Jacques would call himself M. de Kirgouan or M. de Champ-Fleury; he was short-sighted, looked only through his half-closed

eyes, and minced his words when he spoke. All this would soon have been discovered and exposed in a French or English port; but it was marvellously successful in Cuba, Martinique, Guadaloupe, or Java.

As to the banking of the sums accruing from his trade, it was for Jacques, who was in a happy state of ignorance with respect to all the movements of the public funds, the simplest thing in the world. In exchange for his gold or notes of hand, he purchased at Visapour and Gazavato the most beautiful diamonds he could procure, so that he became in the end almost as good a judge of diamonds as he was of negroes. Then he would place the newly purchased jewels along with the others, in a waist-belt which he wore constantly on his person. Did he want money, he would fumble in his belt and draw forth either a brilliant as large as a pea or else a rose diamond, and entering the shop of the first Jew he met with, would have it weighed and forthwith dispose of it at the market price. Then like Cleopatra who drank the pearls given her by Mark Anthony, he eat and drank his diamond, only unlike the Queen of Egypt, *his* jewels served him for several excellent repasts.

Following this system Jacques wore constantly about his person jewels to the value of two or three millions of francs, which of course were easily hidden on occasion; for Jacques did not attempt to deny the fact that the profession which he had adopted was exposed to several risks and chances, that his trade was not exactly a bed of roses, and that after years of good fortune, days of reverses might come.

But until these unknown days should make their appearance, Jacques, as we have said, led a very happy life—a life, moreover, which he would not have exchanged for a throne, seeing that at this epoch the occupants of thrones were not in a very enviable position. Our adventurer would therefore have been perfectly happy, had not the recollection of his father and George occasionally saddened him. So one fine morn-

ing he could no longer resist the temptation which assailed him, and as, after having taken in some negroes at Senegambia and Congo, he had proceeded, in order to complete his cargo, to the coasts of Mozambique and Zanguebar, he resolved to make a run to the Isle of France, to inform himself if his father was still alive and well, and if his brother had yet returned. He had consequently, when off the coast, made the signals in use among slavers, and had been replied to by corresponding ones. Chance had so willed it that these signals should be exchanged between father and son, so that in the evening Jacques found himself not only upon his native shore, but still better, in the arms of those whom he had come to seek.

CHAPTER XV.

PANDORA'S BOX.

It was, as may be supposed, a great happiness for this family, the members of whom had not seen each other for such a length of time, to find themselves united at the very moment when they the least expected it. There had indeed arisen for the first few moments in George's heart, thanks to his European education, a feeling of regret on finding his brother a merchant of human flesh, but this first sensation had been quickly dissipated. As to Pierre Munier, who had never quitted the island, and consequently saw everything in a colonial point of view, he paid no attention whatever to it. The poor father was, besides, entirely pre-occupied with the unhoped-for happiness of once more beholding his children.

Jacques, as may be supposed, returned to Mocha to sleep, and the little family party did not separate until a late hour in the night. During this first and intimate conversation each opened his heart to the others. Pierre Munier spoke of his past sorrows and his present joy; he had no feeling but that of paternal love. Jacques recounted his adventurous life, his strange pleasures, his eccentric fortunes. Then came George's turn, and George related the story of his love.

At this recital Pierre Munier trembled in every limb. George—a mulatto—the son of a mulatto—loved a white woman!—and had declared, when avowing his love, that this woman should be his. It was a piece of unheard-of audacity, an exhibition of pride unexampled in the colonies, which in his opinion could not fail to draw upon him all the misfortunes of this earth and all the displeasure of Heaven.

As to Jacques, it seemed to him natural enough that George should love a white woman; although for a *thousand* reasons, which he deduced most marvellously,

he much preferred the black women. But Jacques was too much of a philosopher not to understand and respect the tastes of all. Besides, he considered that George, handsome, rich, and superior to every other as he was, might aspire to the hand of any white woman in the world, were she even Aline, queen of Golconda!

In any case, he offered George an expedient which would simplify matters in a great degree. This was, in case of a refusal on the part of M. de Malmedie, to carry off Sara in his brigantine, and land her in any part of the world she might choose to fix on, and where George might rejoin her. George thanked his brother for his obliging offer, but as he had at present another plan in contemplation he refused it.

On the following morning, the inhabitants of Mocha rejoined each other at an early hour, there were so many things forgotten the evening before, about which they had to converse. Towards eleven o'clock, Jacques was seized with a sudden desire to revisit all those spots among which his childish years had been spent, and accordingly he proposed to his father and brother to take a stroll with him over the estate. The old Munier accepted the proposal; but George, expecting as may be remembered some news from the city, was obliged to let them go without him, and remained at the dwelling-house, where he had appointed to meet Miko-Miko.

In about half-an-hour George saw his messenger appear. He carried over his shoulder his long perch of bamboo and his two paniers, as if he were exercising his calling in the city; for the provident tradesman had supposed it just possible that he might on his road fall in with some lover of Chinese curiosities. George, despite that wonderful command which he had succeeded with so much difficulty in acquiring over himself, proceeded, with a beating heart, to open the door, for this man had seen Sara and was about to speak to him of her. As might be supposed, everything had happened in the simplest manner in the world. Miko-Miko, using

his privilege of entering everywhere, had readily gained admittance into the dwelling of M. de Malmedie; and Bijou, who had seen his young mistress purchase the fan from the Chinese, conducted him straight to Sara's apartment.

At the sight of the pedlar Sara started; for by a natural chain of ideas and circumstances, Miko-Miko recalled George to her mind. She therefore hastened to receive him, regretting only that she should be forced to converse with him by means of signs. Miko-Miko then drew from his pocket the visiting card upon which George with his own hand had written the prices of the different articles with which Miko-Miko had thought to tempt the heart of Sara, and handed it to her with the side on which the name was engraved uppermost.

Sara despite herself blushed deeply and turned the card quickly. It was perfectly evident that George, not being able to see her, had employed this means of recalling himself to her recollection. Without attempting therefore to bargain with the merchant, she purchased all those articles, the prices of which were written with the young man's hand. Then as the pedlar thought not of asking for his card, she on her part thought not of returning it to him.

This visit to the apartments of the young lady had allowed Miko-Miko to observe the house as it were in detail. And as Miko-Miko, among the bumps which ornamented his shaven crown, possessed in the highest degree that one which is generally known by the appellation of "locality," he had retained in his memory a perfect recollection of the plan of M. de Malmedie's dwelling.

The house had three entrances: one which communicated, as we have said, with the Company's garden by a rustic bridge crossing the rivulet; the other, on the opposite side, opening upon a lane planted with trees, leading into the Rue du Gouvernement; and lastly, the third, a side entrance which looked towards the Rue de la Comedie.

On proceeding to the house by the principal entrance,

that is to say by the bridge which crossed the rivulet into the Company's garden, the visiter found himself in a large square court-yard, planted with mangoes and Chinese lilacs, through the leaves and flowers of which might be discerned in front the principal dwelling, into which an entrance was effected by a door almost parallel to that of the street. Thus placed, the visiter would have on his immediate right the apartments of the negro servants, and on his left the stables. Further on, and also on his right, was a pavilion, o'ershadowed by a magnificent sang-dragon, and, facing this pavilion, a second suite of rooms destined also for the use of the slaves. Lastly, at the farthest extremity, on the left, was the side door which opened into the Rue de la Comedie, and, on the right, a passage leading to a little stair-case and opening on an alley planted with trees, forming a terrace which extended in front of the theatre.

In this manner, if the reader has closely followed the description we have endeavoured to lay before him, he will perceive that the pavilion we have mentioned was separated from the body of the dwelling-house by the passage. Now, as this pavilion was the favourite retreat of Sara, and as it was there she passed the greater portion of her time, the reader will permit us to add a few words of description, in addition to what we have already said about it in one of our preceding chapters.

This pavilion had four fronts, although only three were visible. In fact one of these sides adjoined the apartments of the negroes. The three others faced, one the entrance court in which the mangoes, Chinese lilacs, and sang-dragon were planted, another the passage leading to the little stair-case, and the third upon a large and almost deserted timber-yard, which opened on one side upon that same rivulet which bathed one of the exterior façades of M. de Malmedie's dwelling, and on the other upon the alley of trees, elevated above the timber-yard by about a dozen feet. Against this alley were built two or three houses, whose slightly inclined roofs offered an easy ascent for those who from any

particular motive might desire to dispense with the more public entrance, and thus penetrate incognito from the alley into the timber-yard.

This pavilion had three windows and a door, opening, as we have said, upon the court-yard. One of these windows opened near this door, another upon the passage, and the third upon the timber-yard.

During Miko-Miko's recital, George smiled three times, but each time with a very different expression. The first time, when his ambassador had told him that Sara had kept the card; the second, when he had spoken of the approaching marriage of Henri with his cousin; the third, when he apprized him that he could effect an entrance into the pavilion by the window opening on the timber-pond.

George placed before Miko-Miko a sheet of paper and a pencil, and whilst, for greater security, the merchant traced a plan of the house, he himself took a pen and began to write a letter. The letter and the plan of the house were completed at the same time.

George then rose and proceeded to his apartment to seek a certain marvellous little Buhl casket worthy of having belonged to Mademoiselle de Pompadour, and placing in it the letter which he had just written, closed and locked the casket, and handed it, with its key, to Miko-Miko, giving him at the same time his instructions; after which Miko-Miko received another quadruple in recompense for the new commission he was about to execute, and after balancing his bamboo on his shoulder, he began to retrace his steps towards the city at the same pace at which he had come, and which would bring him in about four hours into the presence of Sara.

As Miko-Miko disappeared at the end of the avenue of trees which led to the plantation, Jacques and his father re-entered by a back way. George, who was upon the point of setting out to join them, was astonished at this prompt return; but Jacques had remarked in the sky certain appearances which announced an approaching storm. Although he had full and entire

confidence in master Têt-de-Fer, his lieutenant, he loved the Calypso too well to confide to another the care of her safety under such serious circumstances. He came therefore to bid farewell to his brother, for from the top of the Thumb mountain, whither he had ascended in order to see if the brigantine was still in the offing, he had perceived the Calypso standing off and on at about two leagues' distance from the coast, and he had then made the signal agreed upon between his lieutenant and himself in case any unforeseen circumstances should compel him to return on board. This signal had been seen and answered, and Jacques did not doubt but that in the course of two hours the boat which had landed him would be waiting to take him off again to his ship.

The poor father had made use of every argument in his power to induce his son to remain with him, but to every one Jacques had replied in his softest tones, "That cannot be, father." And the old man understood by the firm though tender manner in which these words were uttered, that it was on his son's part a firmly-taken resolution, and he therefore ceased to urge him.

As to George, he understood so perfectly the motives which induced Jacques to return on board, that he did not even attempt to dissuade him from his project. He merely announced to his brother that he and his father would accompany him over the chain of the Peter Bot, from the opposite slope of which they could see Jacques embark, and follow him with their eyes until he should reach his brigantine.

Jacques therefore set out accompanied by George and his father, and all three, by tracks known only to sportsmen, reached the source of the Calabash River. At this spot Jacques bid farewell to the friends of his heart, whom he had seen so little of, but whom he solemnly promised very shortly to revisit again.

An hour afterwards the boat left the shore, bearing away Jacques, who, faithful to that love which the ge-

nine sailor ever experiences for his ship, returned to save the Calypso or to perish with her.

Scarcely had Jacques ascended the side, when the brigantine, which until then had been standing off and on, crowded all sail, doubled the Ile de Sable, and bore away under a press of canvas towards the north.

During this time the appearance of the sky and sea had become every instant more and more threatening. The sea broke in hoarse and angry murmurs upon the shore, while the tide rose rapidly although it was not yet the hour of the flood. Overhead the heavens were obscured by huge masses of vapour which drifted rapidly across the sky, and parting at intervals gave passage to gusts of wind varying from every point of the compass. To any one but a sailor, these symptoms, however, prognaged but an ordinary gale, and several times already in the course of the year there had been similar threatenings without these warnings leading to any catastrophe; but on returning to the house, George and his father were compelled to acknowledge the sagacity of Jacques's eye. The mercury in the barometer had already fallen below twenty-eight degrees.

Pierre Munier immediately gave orders to the overseer to cut away everywhere the stalks of the manioc, in order to save their roots at least, which, during hurricanes, if such precautions are not taken, are almost invariably torn from the earth and carried away by the wind.

George, on his side, gave orders to Ali to saddle Bayard at eight o'clock. At this order Pierre Munier started:

"And why saddle your horse?" asked he in alarm.

"I must be in the city at ten o'clock, my dear father," replied George.

"But, my dear boy, it is impossible!" cried the old man.

"I must be there, father," said George.

And in the accent of his voice, as in that of Jacques's, the poor father recognised so firm a resolution that he drooped his head with a sigh and insisted no farther.

During this time Miko-Miko was fulfilling his mission.

Immediately on his arrival at Port Louis he took his way to the house of M. de Malmedie, to which the command of Henri had given him ready and instant access. He presented himself this time with more confidence, as in passing by the port he had seen MM. de Malmedie, father and son, occupied in observing the ships at anchor in the roads, the captains of which, in anticipation of the hurricane which threatened them, were busily engaged in doubling their moorings. He therefore entered the dwelling of M. de Malmedie without fear of being disturbed by any one in the affair he was about to undertake; and Bijou, who had seen Miko-Miko that very morning in conference with his young master, and also with her whom he already regarded as his young mistress, conducted him straight to Sara, who, according to her usual custom, was seated in her pavilion.

As George had foreseen, among the new articles with which the broker came to tempt the curiosity of the young beauty, it was the charming Buhl casket which at once and above all attracted her regards. Sara took it up, turned and re-turned it in all directions, and after having admired the exterior, she wished to examine it within, and accordingly demanded the key. Miko-Miko then feigned to search everywhere for the key, but in vain, no key was to be found; at last he then made signs to express that he had not it about him, but in all probability had forgotten it at home, whither he would run and seek it. He accordingly left the house, leaving behind him the casket, and promising to return with the key.

In about ten minutes afterwards, while the young girl, in all the ardour of childish curiosity, was turning the miraculous casket round for the hundredth time, Bijou entered the room and handed her the key which Miko-Miko had contented himself by forwarding to her through the hands of the negro.

It mattered very little to Sara how the key came so

that it did come at last. She therefore took the key from Bijou, who retired in order to close as quickly as possible all the shutters in the house, the safety of which was threatened by the hurricane. Sara, left alone, hastened to open the casket.

The casket, as we know, contained only a slip of paper, which was not even sealed, but merely folded into four.

George had foreseen and calculated everything.

It was necessary that Sara should be alone at the moment when she discovered the letter, and also that the letter should be open, in order that Sara might not return it, saying that she had not read the contents.

Sara accordingly finding herself alone, hesitated for an instant; but conjecturing from whom this billet came, and influenced besides by curiosity, by love, by those thousand sentiments in short which whisper to a maiden's heart, she could no longer resist the desire of seeing what George had written, and with heaving bosom and burning cheeks, she took the note, unfolded it, and read the following words:—

“SARA,

“I need not tell you that I love you—you must already know it. The dream of my entire existence has been to find a companion like you.

“In this life we are sometimes placed in circumstances which seem to be the crisis of our fate, and which break down all the barriers of etiquette and all the usages of society.

“Sara, do you love me? Weigh well what your life will be with M. de Malmedie—weigh well what your life will be with me. With him you will enjoy a lofty position in society—with me you must share the odium which an unjust prejudice entails upon me. I have only to offer you in return, the homage of a heart which beats only for you, and with the deepest and purest affection.

“I know well that M. de Malmedie hurries on the

moment which is to make him your husband; there is therefore no time to be lost; you are yet free. Sara, lay your hand upon your heart, and decide between Henri de Malmedie and me.

"Your answer will be as sacred to me as a mother's request. This evening at ten o'clock, I shall be at the pavilion to receive it. "GEORGE."

Sara cast a terrified glance around her. She almost fancied that in turning she should see George.

At this moment the door opened, and in place of George, Sara saw Henri de Malmedie appear: she hid George's letter in her bosom.

Henri, as we have already seen, was in general rather unfortunate in his advances to his fair cousin; on this occasion he was not happier than usual. The moment was ill chosen for presenting himself before Sara, pre-occupied as she was with another.

"Pardon me, my dear Sara," said Henri, "if I enter your apartments unannounced; but situated as we are, and between persons who in a few days will be husband and wife, such liberties are in my opinion perfectly admissible, whatever people may say to the contrary. Besides I come to warn you, that if you have any pretty flowers outside that you particularly care for, you had better place them in shelter as soon as you can."

"And why so?" demanded Sara.

"Do you not see that there is a hurricane coming on, and that flowers as well as men will be better within doors than without to-night?"

"O Heavens!" cried Sara, her thoughts suddenly reverting to George, "will there be any danger then?"

"For us, who have a solid roof over our heads, I should answer no," said Henri, "but for those poor devils who dwell in huts or who may be obliged to be on the road, I should say yes, and I confess I should not wish to be in their place."

"Do you think so, Henri?"

"Do I think so, indeed! Hark, do you not hear?"

"What?"

"The filao^s* in the Company's garden."

"Yes, yes; they are groaning, and that is a sign of an approaching tempest, is it not?"

"And do you not observe the sky, how fast it is becoming overcast; so I repeat, Sara, that if you have any flowers to place under cover, you have no time to lose; for my part I am going to shut up my dogs."

And so saying, Henri left the room in order to place his hounds in shelter from the storm.

In fact the night advanced with unusual rapidity; the heavens became rapidly overcast with heavy black clouds, and from time to time violent gusts of wind would shake the building; then all would become calm again, but it was that deep, still, oppressive calm, which seemed like the dying agony of panting Nature. Sara looked out into the court, and saw the mangoe trees trembling as if they had been endowed with thought, and instinctively foresaw the terrible conflict which was about to take place between the elements, whilst the Chinese lilacs drooped their flowers, in mute sadness, to the ground. At this sight the young girl felt so deep a sensation of terror take possession of her that she instinctively clasped her hands together, murmuring to herself:

"O Heavens protect him!"

At this moment Sara heard the voice of her uncle, calling her name. She opened the door.

"Sara," said M. de Malmedie, "Sara, come hither, my child; you will not be in safety in that pavilion."

"I am coming, my dear uncle," said the young girl, closing and locking the door after her, and withdrawing the key, least any one should enter in her absence.

But in place of joining Henri and his father, Sara retired to her bed-chamber. An instant afterwards, M. de Malmedie came to see what she was doing. She

* A sort of tree which in the colonies is used instead of our cypresses over tombs.

was on her knees before the crucifix which hung at the foot of her bed.

"What are you doing there?" said he, "instead of coming to take tea with us."

"Uncle," replied Sara, "I am praying for the poor travellers."

"Ah! pardieu!" said M. de Malmedie, "I am very certain that there is not a man throughout the entire island, so mad as to think of stirring out in such weather."

"I pray sincerely that you may be right, uncle," said Sara. And she continued on her knees.

In fact there was no longer any doubt on the subject, and the event which Jacques with a sailor's eye had foreseen, was about to be realized: one of those awful hurricanes, alike the terror and the scourge of the colonies, was about to burst in all its fury over the Isle of France. The night, as we have said, had closed in with frightful rapidity; but the flashes of lightning succeeded each other with such swiftness and at the same time with such brilliancy, that the obscurity was almost dissipated by a blue and livid light, which imparted to all objects the cadaverous tint of those expired worlds, which Byron makes his hero visit under the guidance of Satan. Each of the short intervals during which the almost incessant flashes of lightning left the darkness mistress of the earth, was filled up by the heavy growling of the thunder, which issuing from behind the mountains, seemed to roll down their slopes, hover above the city, and finally lose itself in the distance. Then frequent and powerful gusts of wind would follow the retreating thunder, and swept by in their turn, bending the strongest trees, as if they had been willow wands, which rose from under the blast slowly and timidly, only to bend, groan, and tremble beneath some fresh gust still mightier than that which had preceded it.

It was in the heart of the island, particularly in the quarter of Moka and in the Williams plains, that the

hurricane, free and unconstrained and as if revelling in its liberty, was most magnificent to contemplate. Pierre Munier was therefore doubly alarmed, first at seeing Jacques depart, and then George preparing to follow his example; but ever feeble before any manifestation of moral force, the poor father bent to necessity, and though trembling at the roaring of the storm, turning pale at each thunder clap, starting at every flash of lightning, he did not attempt to detain George by his side. As for the young man himself, his heart beat higher and his form seemed to dilate, in proportion as the danger became more imminent. The reverse of his father, at each menacing sound he raised his head proudly, at each lightning flash he smiled: he who had until then essayed all human conflicts, seemed to rise in daring as the time drew near when he should have to contend with Nature.

Accordingly, when the hour of departure arrived, with that inflexibility of resolution which was the distinctive feature of his character, George approached his father, held out his hand to him, and without appearing to comprehend the trembling of that which met his grasp, he left the room with a step as firm and a face as calm as though he were going about the ordinary concerns of life. At the door he encountered Ali, who with the passiveness of oriental obedience, held by the bridle Bayard ready saddled. As though he had recognised the whistling of the simoon or the roarings of the khamsin, the child of the desert reared up, neighing aloud. George patted him on the neck caressingly, repeating as he did so a few Arabic words; then with the ease and grace of an accomplished horseman, disdaining the assistance of the stirrup, he sprang with one bound into the saddle. At the same instant Ali let go the bridle, and Bayard darted off with the rapidity of lightning, without George having remarked his father, who in order not to separate himself from his beloved son till the last moment, had half opened the door and now stood following him with his eyes, until he disap-

peared at the end of the avenue which led from the dwelling-house to the high road to Port Louis.

It was a noble sight to see this man borne along in a career as rapid as the storm through which he sped, sweeping through space like Faust repairing to the Brocken upon his infernal courser. All around him was disorder and confusion. Nothing was to be heard but the crashing of the trees prostrated by the tempest. The sugar canes and manioc plants, wrenched from their stalks, whirled through the air like feathers borne by the wind. Birds, seized in the middle of their sleep and carried away by a flight which they could neither resist nor control, swept in fantastic flights around George's head, filling the air with their piercing notes, while from time to time some frightened stag would dart across his path, impelled by terror as an arrow from a hunter's bow. Then George was happy; he felt his bosom swell with pride, for he alone was calm amid the universal disorder, and while all bent or gave way around him, he alone pursued his path towards that goal which his will had fixed, without anything having power to cause him to deviate from his course, or turn him aside from his project.

He proceeded thus for nearly an hour, crossing in his headlong course the trunks of broken trees, rivulets now swollen to torrents, and huge stones uprooted from their beds and rolling down from the tops of the mountains. At length he perceived the sea, magnificent in its commotion, its green and foaming waves bursting with terrific sound upon the coast, as if the hand of the Supreme was no longer willing to contain their fury. George had now reached the foot of the Signal mountain; he swept round its base still borne along in the headlong career of his impetuous steed, crossed the Citizen's Bridge, left to the right the Rue de la Côte d'Or, passed behind the walls of the quarter, and crossing the ramparts, descended by the Rue de la Rampe into the Company's garden. Ascending from thence through the now deserted city, amid the fragments of falling chim-

neys, crumbling walls, and flying tiles, he followed the course of the Rue de la Comedie, turned suddenly to the right into the Rue du Gouvernement, dashed into the passage situated in the front of the theatre, leaped from his horse, opened the barrier which separated this passage from the lane which overlooked M. de Malmedie's house, reclosed the barrier behind him, threw the bridle upon the neck of Bayard, who no longer having an outlet left him for flight could not stray; then, letting himself glide down the roofs which were built against the wall bordering the lane, and springing from thence to the ground, he found himself in the timber-yard upon which the windows of the pavilion we have described, opened.

During this time Sara was in her bed-chamber listening to the howling of the wind, crossing herself at each flash of lightning, praying without ceasing that the storm would prevent George from coming. Then all at once she shuddered when she remembered the firm and determined character of her lover, and she felt that nothing but death would hinder him from keeping his appointment. In imagination she already beheld George lying wounded and bleeding under some tree torn from its base, crushed under some fragment of rock, or carried along by some frightful mountain torrent in its impetuous course, and she then felt and understood how rapid was the progress of that power which her lover had acquired over her, a power so lately in its infancy, and already so strong and powerful that her poor heart could but throb and tremble, recognising itself vanquished without having even essayed the struggle.

As the appointed hour drew nigh, Sara's agitation became every instant more intense. With eyes fixed upon the time-piece she followed the motions of the hands, and a voice within the inmost recesses of her heart whispered to her, that at each minute which the hand numbered George drew nearer to her. The minute-hand successively marked nine, half-past nine, a quarter to ten, while the tempest which raged with-

out, far from lulling, became every moment more terrible. The house trembled to its foundations, and the blast which howled around it seemed every moment as if it would have torn it from its base. From time to time, amid the groaning of the filao, and the cries of the negroes whose huts, frailer than the habitations of the whites, gave way before the breath of the hurricane as the tower of cards falls before the breath of the child who has constructed it, might be heard at intervals the melancholy call of some merchant ship in distress, seeking that assistance which her crew well knew no human power could give them.

Among all these different sounds, the echoes of devastation, Sara suddenly fancied that she could distinguish the neighing of a horse. She rose up at once; her resolution was taken. The man who amid such dangers, when the bravest trembled in their houses, came to her, traversing in his way uprooted forests, swollen torrents, yawning precipices, and all to whisper "I love you, Sara," was indeed worthy of her. And if George had done that, George who had saved her life, and who had now in his turn exposed his own for her sake, then she would be his as he was hers.

With that decision which is sometimes imparted by extraordinary circumstances, Sara left her apartment, gained the end of the corridor, descended by the little exterior staircase we have already mentioned, which from the force of the storm seemed moving from under her feet, and found herself at the angle of the square court. Advancing slowly, stumbling at each step over some broken fragment driven thither by the storm, and clinging to the wall of the pavilion in order to avoid being blown down by the wind, she gained the door. At the moment when she placed the key in the lock, a sudden and vivid flash of lightning showed her her mango trees torn from their roots, her lilacs scattered, and her flowers broken; then only was she enabled to form an idea of that terrible convulsion under which the whole frame of nature seemed prostrated. She then fancied that she had watched and waited in vain, and that George would

not come, not because he feared the storm, but because he was no more. Before this idea all other considerations gave way, and Sara threw open the door and entered the pavilion.

"Thanks, Sara," exclaimed a voice which vibrated to her heart's core. "A thousand thanks! I was not deceived, then. You love me, Sara. A thousand blessings attend you!"

At the same moment Sara felt a hand grasp her own, a heart beat against her heart, a breath mingle with her breath. A rapid, consuming, and hitherto unknown sensation ran through her entire frame. Breathless, dizzy, drooping as a flower bends over its stock, she sank upon her lover's shoulder, utterly worn out by the conflict which for two hours she had sustained, and having only strength to murmur:

"George, George, have pity on me!"

George felt and understood this appeal of weakness to strength, of a maiden's modesty to the loyalty and honour of her lover; he bent his head towards the lovely face of the young Creole, and whispered, "You are mine, Sara, are you not—mine for life?"

"Oh yes, yes, for life!" murmured the young girl.

"Nothing shall ever separate us, nothing but death?"

"Nothing but death!"

"You swear it, Sara?"

"By the memory of my mother, George!"

"Thanks," murmured the young man, trembling at the same time with happiness and pride. "From this moment, Sara, you are my wife, and woe to him who shall endeavour to tear you from me."

At these words George pressed his lips to those of the young girl; then tearing himself away he darted into the neighbouring cabinet, the window of which as well as that of the pavilion opened upon the timber-yard, and disappeared.

At this moment so terrible a peal of thunder broke over the house, that Sara involuntarily fell upon her knees. Almost at the same instant the door was thrown open, and M. de Malmedie and Henri entered.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

DURING the night the hurricane ceased, but it was not until the following morning that all the damage it had caused could be estimated.

A portion of the shipping anchored in the port had sustained considerable injury; several vessels had been dashed against each other and had been mutually damaged. The greater portion had been entirely dismantled, and lay like logs upon the water, and two or three had dragged their anchors and gone ashore on the Ile aux Tonneliers. Lastly there was one, a fine merchant vessel which had foundered in the port and all hands lost, without any one being able to render the slightest assistance.

On shore, the devastation was no less extensive. Very few of the houses in Port Louis had escaped this terrible scourge. Almost all those which had been covered with shingles, slates, and tiles, or with sheets of copper or zinc, had had their roofs carried away by the storm. Those whose roofs were built in the form of argamasses, or Indian terraces, had alone completely resisted the force of the wind. In the morning the streets were blocked up with fragments of every kind, and some buildings were sustained in an upright position only by the aid of numerous props. All the stands prepared for the races in the Champs de Mars had been thrown down. Two pieces of cannon of large calibre mounted on a battery in the neighbourhood of the Grand Riviere, had been completely turned round by the force of the wind, and one of them was found in the morning in an opposite direction to that in which it had been left the evening before.

The interior of the island presented an aspect no less deplorable. All that remained cut of the harvest—and fortunately the harvest had been almost gathered in—had been torn up from the earth; in several places entire acres of forest presented the aspect of a wheat

field beaten down by the hail. Scarce a single isolated tree had been able to resist the hurricane, and even the tamarinds themselves, the most flexible of all, had been broken, a circumstance which had until then been regarded as an impossibility.

The dwelling-house of M. de Malmedie, one of the most strongly built in Port Louis, had suffered severely, and at one moment during the height of the storm the shocks had been so violent that M. de Malmedie and his son resolved to seek refuge in the pavilion, which, built entirely of stone and but one story high, and moreover being sheltered by the terrace, evidently offered less obstruction to the wind. Henri then ran to his cousin's bed-room, but finding it empty imagined that, like himself and his father, Sara, terrified by the storm, had sought shelter in the pavilion. They had accordingly descended together, and there as we have seen had found her. Her presence there at that hour of the night was thus naturally accounted for, and her terror required no excuse. The result was that neither father nor son suspected for a single moment the cause which had induced Sara to quit her chamber, naturally attributing it to a sentiment of fear, from which they themselves had not been exempt.

Towards daybreak, as we have said, the tempest lulled. But although none had slept during the night, no one dared even yet to consign himself to repose; each was occupied in verifying the amount of personal loss he had sustained. From an early hour in the morning the new governor traversed the streets of the capital, placing the garrison at the disposal of the inhabitants, and the result was, that towards the evening a portion of the traces left by the tempest had already disappeared.

It must be confessed however, that all with one accord used every exertion in order to restore Port Louis to the aspect which it possessed the evening before. The festival of the Yamsé, one of the grandest solemnities of the Isle of France drew near; and as this festival, the very name of which is in all probability unknown

in Europe, is intimately connected with the events of this narrative, we request permission of our readers to say a few words concerning its nature and origin.

Every one knows that the great Mahometan family is divided into two sects, not only differing in themselves, but more still at enmity with each other, the Sunnites and the Schytes. The first, in which are enrolled the Arabian and Turkish populations, recognise Abou-Beker, Omar, and Osman, as the legitimate successors of Mahomet; the second, which comprises the Persians and the Indian Mussulmans, regard the three Caliphs as usurpers, and affirm that Ali, the son-in-law and minister of the prophet, had alone any right to his political and religious inheritance. In the course of the long wars which the rival professors waged against each other, Hosein, the son of Ali, was attacked near the city of Kerbela by a troop of soldiers which Omar had dispatched against him; and the young prince, along with sixty of his relatives who accompanied him, was massacred after an heroic defence.

It is the anniversary of this deplorable event which the Indian Mussulmans celebrate every year by a solemn festival; this festival is called Yamsé, a corruption of the cries of, "Ya Hosein! O Hosein!" which the Persians repeat in chorus. They have moreover transformed the festival in spirit as well as in name, by mingling with its religious observances several usages of their native country, and ceremonies of their ancient faith.

It was therefore on the following Munday, being the day of the full-moon, that the Lascars, who represent in the Isle of France the Schyte Indians, were according to custom to celebrate the festival of the Yamsé, and to afford the colony the spectacle of this strange ceremony, which was this year awaited with more curiosity than it had ever been before.

In fact an unexpected circumstance was on this occasion to render the festival more magnificent than it had previously been. The Lascars are divided into two bands—the Lascars of the sea and the Lascars of the

land. Those of the sea are distinguished by their green robes, and those of the land by their white ones. Usually each band celebrates the festival in its own way, with the utmost pomp and display possible, each seeking to eclipse its rival. The result is a feeling of emulation which leads to disputes and very frequently degenerates into quarreling. The sea Lascars, poorer though braver than those of the land, frequently revenge themselves for the financial superiority of their adversaries, by blows of sticks and sometimes even of cutlasses, and the police on such occasions are obliged to interfere to prevent a mortal combat.

But this year, thanks to the active intervention of some unknown negotiator, animated doubtless by religious zeal, the two bodies had thrown aside their mutual jealousies, and had united themselves together to form but one single band; accordingly the report, as we have said, was generally spread, that the forthcoming solemnity would be both more peaceable and more sumptuous than it had been for many years.

The reader may therefore imagine with how much impatience, in a locality so destitute of amusement as the Isle of France, this festival is awaited, curious as it is even for those who have seen it every year from their childhood. For three months previously it is the universal subject of conversations; nothing is spoken of but the gouhn which is to serve as the principal ornament of the festival. And now after having enlightened our readers on the subject of the festival itself, we must be allowed to say a few words respecting the gouhn.

The gouhn is a species of pagoda, formed of bamboo, in general three stories in height, diminishing from the base to the apex, and covered with papers of all colours: each of these stories is constructed in a separate hut, through one side of which it is withdrawn when finished; this done, the three separate stories are placed into a fourth hut, sufficiently lofty to permit the erection of the pagoda within its walls. In this workshop they are then united together by strong ligatures, and the finishing touches put by the various artists to the complete edifice. In

order to attain a result worthy of the end they have in view, the Lascars very frequently employ four months in advance in seeking through the entire colony for the most skilful workmen; Indians, Chinese, free blacks and slaves are alike called into requisition. Only in place of paying the wages of these last to the individuals themselves, they pay it to their masters.

Amidst the individual losses which each had to deplore, it was with a feeling of general joy and satisfaction that the inhabitants of Port Louis learned that the hut in which the gouhn (now arrived at a complete state of perfection) was deposited, sheltered as it was under the lee of the Thumb mountain, had escaped all injury. Nothing was wanting therefore this year to complete the glory of the festival, to which the governor, in order to render himself popular on his arrival, had added horse races, the prizes to be contended for at which sports, he had, with aristocratic generosity, reserved to himself the right of bestowing, stipulating only that each proprietor should ride his own horse according to the custom of the gentlemen riders in England.

Everything, therefore, as we have seen, concurred to cause the last traces of the general disaster to be forgotten in the coming pleasure; consequently, upon the day succeeding the hurricane, the preparations for the festival already began to take the place of the pre-occupation caused by the storm.

Sara alone, contrary to her usual habits, absorbed as she was in thoughts unknown to those around her, appeared to take no interest in a solemnity which on preceding years had in the highest degree excited her gay and *insouciant* disposition. In fact the entire aristocracy of the Isle of France usually attended both the races and the festival of the Yamsé, either seated in stand-houses raised expressly for their accommodation, or else remaining in their carriages; in either case it was a delightful opportunity for the pretty Creoles of Port Louis to display their eastern profusion and elegance. It was natural enough, therefore, that her friends and relatives should be astonished that Sara,

upon whom in general the mere announcement of a ball or spectacle no matter what it might be, produced such a deep and lively impression, should on this occasion remain almost an entire stranger to what was passing around her. Ma mie Henriette herself, who had superintended the education of the young girl from her childhood, and who could read to the bottom of her heart as through the purest crystal, failed altogether in divining the mystery, and had become thoughtful and uneasy in consequence.

Let us hasten to say that ma mie Henriette, whose return to Port Louis we neglected amid the more important events of our history to announce, had been so terrified during the night of the hurricane, that although still suffering from the remains of the attack of fever, she had taken her departure from the Black River immediately upon the wind lulling, and had arrived during the course of the day at Port Louis; she had therefore since the previous evening been once more, united to her pupil, whose unusual pre-occupation as we have already mentioned began seriously to alarm her.

And in truth it must be confessed that during the last three days a great change had taken place in the young girl's existence; from the moment when she first beheld George, his features, his figure, even the very sound of his voice had remained engraven in her heart; she had then more than once reflected with an involuntary sigh on her future marriage with her cousin Henri, a marriage to which for ten years she had given a tacit consent, for the simple reason that she had never for a moment suspected that circumstances might arise which would render it an obligation impossible to fulfil. But from the day of the governor's fête she felt that to accept her cousin for a husband would be to make her whole future life miserable. Then, as we have seen, the moment arrived when she not only felt that this fear had changed to conviction, but had solemnly promised to George never to be another's. This, it must be confessed therefore, was a situation calculated to afford much food for reflection to a young girl of sixteen, and to cause

her to see, in a point of view far less important than she had hitherto beheld them, all those fêtes and parties of pleasure which up to this moment had in her eyes appeared the most important events of life.

During the five or six days previously, M. de Malmedie and his son had not been entirely free from anxiety either. The refusal of Sara to dance with another when she could not dance with George, her retiring from the ball at the moment when it was just commencing, she who was in general the last to leave, her obstinate silence whenever her uncle or cousin introduced the subject of her future marriage, all these things did not appear to them by any means natural. They had both accordingly decided that the preparations for the marriage should go on without any further allusion to it being made to Sara, and that when everything should be nearly completed, then only should she be made acquainted with it. This arrangement was the more easily carried out as no precise period had ever been fixed for their union, and as Sara having just attained the age of sixteen years was perfectly old enough to fulfil the views which M. de Malmedie had always entertained respecting her.

All these separate and peculiar anxieties formed as it were one general pre-occupation, which for the last three or four days had thrown an air of coldness and restraint over the meetings of the different persons who composed the household of M. de Malmedie. These re-unions generally took place four times a-day; in the morning at breakfast-time, at two o'clock for dinner, at five o'clock for tea, and at nine, the usual hour for supper. For the last three days Sara had asked and obtained permission to breakfast in her own room. This was at all events one hour of embarrassment and restraint spared her out of the four and twenty, but there still remained meetings which she could not possibly avoid except under the plea of indisposition, and as such excuses could not last for ever, Sara had made up her mind to endure them, and accordingly came down at the usual hours.

Upon the day following the events we have just related, at about five o'clock in the evening, Sara was seated in the drawing room near a window, engaged upon some piece of embroidery which afforded her a pretext for keeping her eyes fixed upon her work, whilst ma mie Henriette made tea, devoting to it all the attention which English ladies usually bestow upon this important occupation, and the two gentlemen of the party standing before the fire, conversed together in a low tone of voice, when all at once the door was thrown open, and Bijou announced Lord William Murray and M. George Munier.

At this double announcement each person present, as may readily be supposed, was struck with a different impression. The Messieurs de Malmedie, fancying they had not heard aright, made the servant repeat the two names he had just pronounced. Sara, blushing deeply, lowered her eyes to her embroidery frame, while ma mie Henriette, who had just turned the spout of the tea-urn in order to make the tea, remained transfixed in such a state of mute amazement, that, occupied in staring in succession at the Messieurs de Malmedie, Sara, and Bijou, she entirely forgot to arrest the progress of the boiling water, which having filled the tea-pot was now finding its way to the table and from thence to the floor.

Bijou repeated the two names, accompanying the delivery of them with the most agreeable smile he could induce his sable physiognomy to assume. M. de Malmedie and his son continued to gaze at each other with an expression of even increasing astonishment, till at length, feeling that an end must be put to this embarrassing situation, the former exclaimed:

"Show the gentlemen in."

Lord William Murray and George entered the room.

Both were in black and in full dress, which indicated a visit of ceremony. M. de Malmedie advanced a few steps to meet his visitors, whilst Sara rose, blushing deeply, and after a timid inclination of the head re-seated herself, or rather fell back again into her chair.

and ma mie Henriette having perceived the little piece of awkwardness which her astonishment had caused her to commit, hastened to check the flow of water from the tea-urn.

Bijou upon a gesture from his master placed two chairs, but George bowed, making a sign as he did so that it was useless and that he should remain standing.

"Monsieur," said the governor, addressing M. de Malmedie, "M. George Munier has requested me to accompany him to your house, and to support by my presence a proposal which he has to make to you. As it is my very sincere desire that that proposal may be accepted, I have willingly acceded to his request, which procures me besides the pleasure of seeing you."

The governor bowed, and the two gentlemen replied by a similar movement.

"We are under deep obligations to M. George Munier," replied the elder M. de Malmedie, "and we shall therefore be enchanted to be of use to him in any way in our power."

"If you mean, monsieur," replied George, "to allude to the happiness I had in saving Mademoiselle de Malmedie from the danger which threatened her, permit me to say that all gratitude is due to Providence, who led me to the spot to do that which any other would have done in my place. Besides," added George, with a smile, "you will presently see, monsieur, that my conduct on this occasion was not altogether free from a selfish motive."

"Pardon me, sir, but I do not understand you," said Henri.

"Rest easy, sir," replied George, "your uncertainty will not be of long continuance; I am about to explain myself clearly."

"We are all attention, monsieur."

"Ought I to retire, uncle?" asked Sara.

"If I dared to hope," said George, turning half-round and slightly bowing, "that a wish of mine would have any influence upon you, mademoiselle, I would beseech you on the contrary to remain."

Sara re-seated herself. There was a moment's silence; then M. de Malmedie made a sign that he awaited the communication George had to make.

"Sir," said George, in a voice perfectly calm and free from emotion, "you know me, you know my family, you know my fortune. I am at the present moment the possessor of a property of the value of two millions of francs. You will, I am sure, pardon me for entering into these details, but I believe them to be indispensable."

"Nevertheless, sir," said Henri, "I must confess that I seek in vain to discover in what way they can interest us."

"Therefore it is not precisely to you, sir, that I address myself," said George, preserving in mien and voice the same degree of calmness, whilst Henri, on the contrary, displayed a visible impatience—"but rather to monsieur your father."

"Permit me to inform you, sir, that I cannot comprehend what occasion my father has for such information any more than myself."

"You will understand immediately, sir," resumed George, coldly; then looking steadily at M. de Malmedie, "I come," continued he, "to request the hand of Mademoiselle Sara de Malmedie."

"And for whom?" demanded M. de Malmedie.

"For myself, monsieur," replied George.

"For you?" cried Henri, making a forward movement which was at once however repressed by a terrible glance from the young mulatto.

Sara turned pale.

"For you?" exclaimed M. de Malmedie.

"For me, monsieur," answered George, bowing.

"But," cried M. de Malmedie, "you are well aware, monsieur, that the hand of my niece is destined for my son."

"By whom, monsieur?" demanded in his turn the young mulatto.

"By whom—by whom? *parbleu!* by myself, to be sure," said M. de Malmedie.

"I would beg to observe to you, monsieur," resumed George, "that Mademoiselle Sara is not your daughter,

but merely your niece, and therefore that she owes you only the obedience of a relative."

"But, sir, all this discussion appears to me more than singular."

"Pardon me," interrupted George, "it is on the contrary perfectly natural; I love Mademoiselle Sara; I believe that I am formed to render her happy; I obey therefore at the same time a desire of my heart and a duty of my conscience."

"But my cousin does not love you, sir," exclaimed Henri, allowing himself to be carried away by his natural impetuosity.

"You deceive yourself, sir," replied George, "and I am authorized by mademoiselle to inform you that she does love me."

"She, she!" cried M. de Malmedie; "it is impossible!"

"You are mistaken, uncle," said Sara, rising in her turn, "and monsieur has spoken the truth."

"What! cousin, have you dared?"—cried Henri, with a gesture strongly resembling a menace, and darting to his cousin's side.

George made a movement; the governor restrained him.

"I do not fear to repeat here," cried Sara, replying by a glance of supreme disdain to the threatening gesture of her cousin, "what I have previously said to M. George. The life that he has saved belongs to him, and I here solemnly affirm that I will never be the wife of another."

And so saying, with a gesture full at the same time of grace and dignity, and with the air and manner of of a queen, she held out her hand to George, who with a deep reverence impressed a kiss upon it.

"This is too much!" exclaimed Henri, raising a little walking-switch he held in his hand, but Lord William Murray arrested Henri's arm as he had previously restrained George.

As to George, he contented himself with casting a disdainful glance upon the junior M. de Malmedie, and leading Sara to the door, he bowed a second time. Sara courtesied in her turn, made a sign to *ma mie Henriette*,

and left the room followed by her governess. George returned.

"You have seen what has passed, monsieur," said he to Sara's uncle; "you can no longer doubt the sentiments entertained by Mademoiselle de Malmedie towards me; I beg, therefore, for the second time, that you will be good enough to give me a positive answer to the proposal I have had the honour of making you."

"A reply! monsieur," cried M. de Malmedie, "a reply! You have the audacity to hope that I will make you any other save the one you merit?"

"I do not dictate the reply that you are to make me, monsieur; only, whatever it be, I beg that you will give me one."

"I trust that you expect none other than a refusal," cried Henri.

"It is to your father I address myself, and not to you, sir," replied George; "let your father answer me, and we can converse afterwards on our own affairs."

"Well, sir," said M. de Malmedie, "you may understand that I give you a positive refusal."

"Very well, sir," answered George; "I expected this reply, but this proceeding was one that I believed it my duty to undertake, and I have performed it."

And so saying, George saluted M. de Malmedie with the same politeness as if nothing had occurred between them; then turning towards Henri:

"Now, sir," said he, "we will settle our little differences, if you please. This is the second time, you may remember, after an interval of fourteen years, that you have raised your hand against me. The first time with a sabre," (as he spoke he parted his hair on his forehead with his hand, and pointed with his finger to a scar with which his brow was marked), "the second time with that switch," and he pointed to the little cane which Henri held in his hand.

"Well?" cried Henri.

"Well," said George, "I demand reparation at your hand for these two insults. You are brave, I am well aware, and I trust that you will reply as a man and a

gentleman should do, to the appeal which I now make to your courage."

"I am very glad, sir, that you are aware of my courage, although, to speak the truth, your opinion on the subject is to me a matter of perfect indifference," replied Henri, with a sneer; "it places me, however, at my ease with regard to the reply which I have to make you."

"And pray what may this reply be, sir?" demanded George.

"That your second proposal is at the least as extravagant as your first. I do not fight, sir, with a mulatto."

George became frightfully pale, while at the same time a smile, indefinable in its expression, wandered over his lips.

"This is your final answer?" said he.

"It is, sir," replied Henri.

"Very well, sir," resumed George, "now I know what course is left for me to pursue."

And saluting the father and son, he retired followed by the governor.

"I prophesied truly, monsieur," said Lord William, when they found themselves in the street.

"And you predicted nothing that I was not myself perfectly well aware of before-hand," replied George, "but I returned to this island to accomplish my destiny, and I must fulfil it to the end. I have a prejudice to combat. It shall crush me or I will destroy it. In the meantime, my Lord, accept my sincere thanks."

George bowed, and after having cordially shaken the hand which the Governor extended to him, he took leave of his companion and proceeded across the Company's garden. Lord William stood gazing after him for some time; then, when he had disappeared round the corner of the Rue de la Rampe, he shook his head with a melancholy expression, murmuring to himself as he bent his steps homewards:

"There goes a man straight to his own ruin; it is a pity, for there is something noble about him."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RACES.

It was on the following Saturday that the festival of the Yamsé was to commence, and the inhabitants had for this occasion exerted themselves so effectually to efface all traces of the hurricane, that one could not have supposed that only six days before the city had barely escaped complete destruction.


At an early hour in the morning, the Lascars, both of sea and land, having united together in one body, issued forth from the Malabar camp, situated without the city, between the rivulets of the Pucelles and the Fau-faron, and preceded by a band of barbarous music, consisting of tambarines, flutes, and guimbardes, took the road to Port Louis, in order to make in the city what they call the *quest*. The two chiefs marched together side by side, each dressed according to the party he represented, the one in a green, the other in a white robe, each bearing in his hand a naked sabre, upon the point of which was fixed a Jamerose. Behind the chiefs marched two mollahs, each bearing aloft with both hands a large dish filled with sugar, and covered with leaves of the Chinese rose; then immediately in the rear of the mollahs came the rest of the Indian phalanx, in tolerably good order.

On their arrival at the first houses of the city the quest commenced; for, doubtless through a spirit of equality, the questors despise not the very meanest of the huts whose offerings, like those of the richest mansions, are destined to cover a portion of the enormous expenses incurred by these poor people in order to render their festival as solemn as possible. Moreover it must be said that the fashion of demanding money, as it is practised by the questors, is in no wise repugnant to oriental pride, and, far from being base and servile,

always presents in its observance something noble and touching. After the chiefs, before whom all doors are thrown open, have saluted the masters of the houses by lowering before them the points of their sabres, the mollahs advance and offer to the bystanders the dish of sugar covered with rose leaves. During this time other Indians appointed by the chiefs receive in plates the gifts which the people are willing to bestow, after which all retire repeating the word, "*Salam*." They thus seem not to receive alms, but rather to invite persons, strangers to their ceremonies, to a symbolical communion, by partaking with them as brothers the expenses of their festival and the gifts of their religion.

In general the quest extends not only, as we have said, to all the houses of the city, but also to the different vessels at anchor in the harbour, which latter fall to the share of the Lascars of the sea. Upon this occasion, however, the quest was very circumscribed in this locality, the greater portion of the shipping having suffered so much from the hurricane that their captains were more in need of assistance themselves, than disposed to bestow it upon others.

At the moment however that the questors were at the port, a ship, signalled from an early hour in the morning, appeared between the redoubt of Labourdonnaie and Fort Blanc. The vessel now approaching had been doubtless yet at a considerable distance from the island when the hurricane had taken place, for not a particle of her rigging was injured, not a rope out of place, and she stood in towards the anchorage, gracefully inclining to the breeze, as if the hand of some sea-nymph impelled her along the surface of the water. From afar and with the aid of glasses the populace on shore could distinguish upon the deck, in the full uniform of King William, the entire crew, which seemed as though they had made their appearance thus decked out for the express purpose of assisting at some ceremony. Consequently it may be guessed that, thanks to her joyous and comfortable aspect, the newly-arrived



ship became the immediate aim of both chiefs. Scarcely had she cast anchor, when the chief of the sea Lascars jumped into a boat, and accompanied by the plate-bearers and a few of his own people, pulled off towards the foreign ship, which on a closer inspection in no wise belied the favourable opinion which had been formed of her when viewed at a distance.

In fact if ever Dutch nestness, so renowned over the four quarters of the globe, had deserved a high eulogium it was at the sight of this beautiful brigantine, which seemed a very floating temple of tidiness and order. Her well-scrubbed deck, as white as snow, might have competed, in point of elegance, with the carpet of the most sumptuous drawing-room. Each of her copper ornaments shone like gold, and the companion ladders, &c. carved in the most precious Indian woods, seemed intended more as ornamental appendages than as objects of utility. As to the arms, they might have been supposed as show arms, destined rather for some museum of artillery than for the arsenal of a ship of war.

Captain Van den Brock, for so was the commander of this charming brigantine named, appeared, when he caught sight of the Lascars, to comprehend at once the meaning of the ceremony, for he advanced to receive their chief at the head of the accommodation-ladder, and after having exchanged with him a few words in his native language, which proved that this was not the first time that he had navigated in the Indian seas, he deposited upon the plate which was presented to him, not a piece of gold, not a rouleau of silver, but a pretty little diamond which might have been valued at about a hundred Louis; excusing himself for not having any other money about him at present, and begging the chief of the Lascars to content himself with this offering. This gift so far exceeded the expectations of the worthy follower of Ali, and harmonized so little with the well-known parsimony of the compatriots of John de Witt, that the chief of the Lascars stood for a moment in wondering silence, not daring to take such a display of

prodigality in a serious point of view; and it was not until after Captain Van den Brock had three or four times assured him that the brilliant was indeed destined for the service of the Schyte band, in whose welfare he professed to feel the most lively interest, that he thanked him for his liberal offering by presenting with his own hands the dish of rose leaves powdered with sugar. The captain dipped his fingers into the dish, took a small quantity of the contents and placed it in his mouth, seeming to eat it with much relish, to the great satisfaction of the Indians who did not quit the hospitable ship until after many salaams. They then continued their quest through the shipping, without however the recital made to each of the good fortune they had met with on board the Dutchman, having been successful in procuring them a second offering as liberal as the first.

Thus passed the whole of the day, each preparing rather for the festival of the morrow than taking part in that of the day, which is considered as it were but a prologue to the rest of the entertainments.

On the following morning the races were to take place. The ordinary yearly races were already considered a high festival in the Isle of France; but those of the year of which we write, occurring with other festivals and above all given by the governor, were, as may be easily supposed, to surpass everything which had been seen of the kind before.

On this occasion, as is always the case, the Champ de Mars was the place set apart for the festival; consequently the whole of the unreserved space was from an early hour in the morning crowded with spectators; for although the principal race—that in which the gentlemen riders were to figure—was the chief attraction of the day, it was not the only one. This sport was to be preceded by certain other grotesque races which, for the common people especially, possessed so much the greater attraction that they were themselves to be the principal actors in them. These preparatory amusements consisted of a pig chase, jumping in sacks, and a pony race.

For each of these, as well as for the grand race, there was a prize to be given by the governor. The conqueror in the pony race was to receive a magnificent double-barrelled fowling-piece of Manton's make; the successful jumper in the sacks an English umbrella; and the individual fortunate enough to vanquish the pig kept for his prize the animal itself. As to the prize of the principal race, it was a silver gilt cup of beautiful proportions, but infinitely less valuable from its material than from the workmanship displayed upon it.

We have already said that from an early hour in the morning that portion of the ground abandoned to the public was crowded with spectators, but it was not until ten o'clock that the fashionables began to arrive. As in England, in France, everywhere in short where races are held, stands had been reserved for the higher classes; but whether from caprice, or in order not to be confounded with the general crowd, some of the prettiest women of Port Louis had decided upon being present at the races in their open carriages; and with the exception of those who had received invitations to take their places in the governor's stand, all ranged themselves in front of it, or as near to it as was possible, leaving the other stands to the citizens and the lower classes. As to the male population, they were for the most part on horseback, preparing to follow the running horses within the inner circle, whilst the amateurs, the members of the Port Louis Jockey Club, were on the turf offering and accepting bets with true Creole carelessness and prodigality.

At half-past ten all Port Louis was assembled in the Champ de Mars. Among the prettiest of the women, and in the most elegant of the carriages, might be remarked Mademoiselle Couder and Mademoiselle Cyprien de Gersigny, at that time one of the youngest unmarried girls, now one of the most beautiful matrons, in the Isle of France, and whose magnificent black hair has become proverbial, even in the salons of Paris. Also the six Demoiselles Druhn, so fair, so fresh, so delicate and

graceful, that the carriage in which they generally drove out together, invariably went by the name of the Basket of Roses.

The governor's stand however might this day have claimed the title conferred upon the carriage of the Demoiselles Druhn. He who has not travelled in the colonies, and above all, who has not visited the Isle of France, cannot form an idea of the charm and grace of all these lovely Creole faces with their velvet eyes and jet black hair, among whom may be distinguished, like flowers of the north, a few pale daughters of Albion, with their transparent skins, their light and floating tresses, and gently inclined necks. Consequently in the eyes of the young men, the bouquets which these lovely spectators held in their hands, were in all probability much more precious than all the cups of Odier's manufacture or Manton's fowling pieces which in his lavish generosity their new governor could present them.

In the front row of the governor's stand was Sara, seated between M. de Malmédie and her companion Henrietta. As for Henri, he was upon the ground taking all bets that were offered against him; and it must be confessed that but few were offered, for besides being an excellent horseman and of considerable renown as a jockey, he was the owner of a horse which was generally considered the swiftest in the island.

At eleven o'clock, the garrison band, placed between the two principal stands, gave the signal for the first race; it was, as we have said, a pig chase.

The reader is doubtless acquainted with this grotesque amusement, still in usage in several villages both in England and France. A pig whose tail has been previously well greased with hogs lard is turned out on the course, and the competitors endeavour to seize the animal, which however they are permitted to catch by the tail only. He who succeeds in stopping the pig is proclaimed conqueror. This race being entirely open to the public, each individual having the right of taking part in it, no names were inscribed.

Two negroes now led in the animal; he was a magnificent porker of the most esteemed breed, fattened previously for the purpose, and quite ready to enter the lists. At this sight, a universal shout was set up, and negroes, Indians, Malays, Madagascans, and natives of the island, bursting through the barriers until now respected, rushed towards the animal, who terrified at this hostile demonstration took to flight.

But the necessary precautions had been taken in order that he should not escape his pursuers; the poor animal had had his two fore-legs attached to his hind ones almost in the same manner in which the legs of horses are fastened when they are required to be taught an ambling pace. The result was that the pig, being able to proceed only at a very moderate trot, was soon overtaken, and the usual series of disappointments began to take place.

As may be readily supposed the chances of success in such a game are not for those who commence it. The freshly greased tail is unseizable, and the pig escapes without difficulty from the hands of his first antagonists; but in proportion as the successive pressures carry away the first layers of grease, the animal begins to perceive that the pretensions of those who hope to stop him are not so ridiculous as he had at first imagined. Then commence heart-rending gruntings, mingled at intervals with piercing cries. From time to time when the attack is too hot, he even turns against the most pressing of his enemies, who, according to the degree of courage they have been endowed with by Nature, either renounce their object or pursue it to the end. At length comes the moment when the tail, deprived of all the foreign aid of art and reduced to its own substance, glides no longer easily from the hand, and ends at length by betraying its proprietor, who fights, struggles, groans in vain, and sees himself at length adjudged to the conqueror by general acclamation.

This time the race pursued its ordinary course. The unfortunate pig disembarrassed himself with the greatest

ease of his first pursuers, and although crippled by his bonds began to gain upon his adversaries. But a dozen of the best and strongest runners in the place now set themselves in earnest upon his pursuit, succeeding each other after the tail of the poor animal with a degree of rapidity which gave him not a moment's rest, and which might have indicated to him that, however bravely staved off, the hour of his defeat approached. At length five or six of his antagonists, panting and breathless, abandoned the attempt in despair. But in proportion as the number of his pursuers diminished so did the chances of those who still held out increase. The latter accordingly redoubled their exertions, calling into play all their vigour and address, encouraged as they were besides by the shouts of the spectators.

Among the number of the select few who appeared resolved to carry on the adventure to the end, were two of our old acquaintances, Antonio the Malay and Miko-Miko the Chinaman. Both had followed the pig from the starting post, and had not quitted it for an instant; more than a hundred times had the tail slipped through their fingers, but each time they felt the progress they had made; and these unfruitful attempts, far from discouraging them, had only inflamed anew their ardour. At length having tired out all their competitors, they found themselves alone in the field. It was at this moment that the struggle became truly interesting, and that large bets were given and taken freely.

The race was to last scarcely ten minutes longer; so that having made almost the entire circuit of the Champ de Mars, the pig had returned to the starting-post, grunting fiercely, and occasionally turning upon his adversaries without in the least intimidating by this heroic defence his two tormentors, who continued in turn their attempts upon his tail with a regularity worthy of Virgil's shepherds. At last Antonio succeeded in stopping for a moment the runaway, and was therefore supposed to be the conqueror. But the animal collecting all his strength gave one pull, so vigorous, that, for the hun-

dreadth time the tail slipped through the fingers of the Malay. Miko-Miko who was on the watch, instantly seized it, and all the chances which Antonio appeared to have had, now turned in the China-man's favour. Then might he have been seen, worthy of the hopes which a portion of the spectators had confided in him, clinging to the animal with both hands, every muscle stiffened to cracking, allowing himself to be dragged along and tugging with all his might, followed by the Malay, who shook his head in sign that he regarded the game as lost, but who at all events held himself in readiness to succeed the China-man, and kept close to the pig's side, his long arms hanging loosely down, and occasionally rubbed his hands in the sand, scarcely requiring to stoop in doing so, for the purpose of giving them a greater degree of tenacity. Unfortunately such honourable perseverance soon appeared likely to be unavailing. Miko-Miko seemed to be on the point of carrying off the prize. After having dragged the China-man after him for a considerable distance, the pig appeared to confess itself vanquished, and stopped, still pulling forward but restrained by an equal force which drew it back. So as two equal forces neutralize each other, the pig and the China-man remained for an instant motionless, each making visible and violent efforts, the one to advance, the other to keep his ground, to the vast and uproarious delight of the multitude. The struggle had already lasted several seconds, and to all appearance would have continued for the stipulated time, when all at once, to the surprise of the lookers-on, the two antagonists were suddenly and violently separated. The animal went rolling forward, and Miko-Miko backwards, both accomplishing the same movement, with this difference only, that one rolled on his belly and the other upon his back. Antonio darted forward, elated with joy and cheered by the shouts of those of the spectators who had an interest in his success, and certain this time of victory. But his joy was short-lived and his disappointment cruel. At the moment of seizing the animal

by the member designated in the programme, he sought in vain. The unhappy pig had no longer a tail; the tail had remained in the hands of Miko-Miko, who arose from his recumbent posture, holding aloft his trophy and appealing to the impartiality of the public.

The case was a new one. An appeal was made to the judges, who deliberated for a few moments, and decided, by a majority of three voices to two, that since Miko-Miko would have most incontestably stopped the animal, if the animal had not preferred separating itself from its tail, *ergo* Miko-Miko ought to be considered the victor.

In consequence of this decision, the name of Miko-Miko was proclaimed, and full authority given him to take possession of the prize to which he was by right entitled; an authorization which the China-man (who had understood by signs) answered, by seizing the pig by the hind legs and impelling it before him as he would have done a wheel-barrow. As to Antonio, he retired grumbling into the crowd, who with that instinct of justice which characterizes a mob, gave him that honourable reception it ever gives to great men in misfortune.

Then arose among the spectators, as frequently happens at the termination of any sight or show which has vividly interested their passions and feelings, a universal buzz and a general movement, which were soon repressed however at the announcement that the running in sacks was about to commence, and every one resumed his place, too well pleased with the first spectacle to risk losing anything of the second.

The distance to be run by the competitors was from the starting-post to the governor's stand, that is to say, about an hundred and fifty paces. At a given signal, the runners, or rather jumpers, to the number of about fifty, issued forth from a hut which had been used as a retiring-room and ranged themselves in a line.

The reader must not be astonished at the number of competitors who presented themselves for this prize.

The prize was as we have said, a magnificent umbrella; and an umbrella in the colonies, and above all in the Isle of France, has always been one of the highest objects of a negro's ambition. Whence they have derived an idea which in their minds has reached almost to a state of monomania, it is impossible for us to say, and even those more learned on this subject than ourselves have made thereupon profound but fruitless researches. It is a fact which we simply record without in the slightest degree seeking to account for it. The governor had therefore been wisely counselled when he chose this article for the prize of sack-jumping.

There are, we imagine, but few of our readers who have not at least once in their lives beheld a similar spectacle; each competitor for the prize is enclosed in a sack which envelops his arms and limbs, and the orifice of which is closed round the neck. It is consequently no longer a question of running but rather of jumping.

This sort of race, in general very grotesque, became yet more so on the present occasion, for the buffoonery natural to the amusement was still further heightened by the sight of the comical heads which surmounted the sacks, and which presented to the eye a strange medley of different colours; this race as well as that of the pig being abandoned altogether to the negroes and Indians.

In the first rank of those whose numerous victories in this kind of warfare had made them a reputation, were cited Telemachus and Bijou, who having inherited the mutual hatreds of the rival houses to which they belonged, rarely met without exchanging insults, which often, we say it to the glory of their courage, even degenerated into vigorous attacks of fisticuffs; but on this occasion, as their hands and feet were close prisoners, and as moreover they were separated by three or four of their comrades, they contented themselves by ferociously rolling their huge eyes at each other. At the moment of starting a fresh competitor jumped from the hut and proceeded to join himself to the band: it was the vanquished of the preceding race, Antonio, the Malay.

At a given signal all started jumping in the most grotesque fashion like a band of kangaroos, striking violently against each other, slipping backwards, rolling forwards, and with difficulty scrambling to their feet only to strike, slip, and fall again. During the first sixty paces it was almost impossible to form any opinion respecting the future conqueror; a dozen of the runners followed each other so closely, and the falls besides were so sudden and unexpected, that every instant the face of things changed completely, in one moment the first being last and the last first. It must be said, however, that among the most skilful, and consequently almost always at the head of the others, might be remarked Telemachus, Bijou, and Antonio. At about a hundred paces from the starting-post they remained alone, and the race was evidently to be decided between these three.

With his habitual cunning, Antonio had quickly remarked, by the furious glances that they darted at each other, the hatred which Bijou and Telemachus mutually nourished, and he calculated upon this aversion at least as much as he did upon his own personal activity, for his success. As chance therefore had so ordained it that he should be placed between them, and consequently separate them from each other, the wily Malay profited by one of the numerous falls he experienced, to take a side place and thus leave the two antagonists side by side. What he had foreseen came to pass. Scarcely had Bijou and Telemachus discovered that the object which separated them had disappeared, than they incontinently approached each other, scowling more horribly than before, grinding their teeth like apes disputing for a nut, and already beginning to mingle certain bitter words with this threatening pantomime. Happily enclosed as they were, each in his sack, they could not pass from words to actions, but it was easy to see by the agitation of the canvas, that their hands experienced the most lively desire to revenge the insults which their mouths uttered. Consequently, carried away by their mutual aversion, they drew so close

together as to be now alongside, so that at each bound they elbowed each other, pouring forth their insults thicker and faster, and mutually promising that once released from durance vile in their canvas coverings, a rencontre would most assuredly take place between them, by far more terrible and disastrous than any of their previous combats. During this time Antonio quietly but steadily gained ground.

At the sight of the Malay who had now got five or six paces in advance, there was a truce for a few moments between the two negroes; both endeavoured by a series of jumps, more gigantic than any they had yet made, to regain their lost advantage, and both in fact were visibly regaining it, and particularly Telemachus, when a new tumble offered them yet another chance for success. Antonio fell, and quickly as the Malay regained his feet, he was passed by Telemachus who now found himself first in the race.

This circumstance was so much the more serious that the competitors were now but ten paces distant from the winning-post; Bijou therefore uttered a roar and by a desperate effort drew near to his rival, but Telemachus was not a man to allow himself to be outstripped, and continued to jump with increasing elasticity so that every one felt assured the umbrella would now indubitably become his property. But "*l'homme propose et Dieu dispose.*" Telemachus made a false step, tottered for a moment amid the shouts of the spectators and fell to the ground; but even in falling, faithful to his hatred, he directed his tumble in such a manner as to bar the way for Bijou. Bijou, carried away by the impetuosity of his career, was unable to alter his direction, struck violently against Telemachus, and rolled in his turn in the dust.

At this instant the same idea entered the heads of both; namely, that rather than let a rival triumph, it would be better to permit a third party to obtain the prize. Consequently, to the utter astonishment of the spectators, the two sacks, in place of rising and con-

tinuing their course to the appointed goal, were scarcely in an erect posture ere they rushed violently against each other, cuffing and butting as well as the canvas prisons in which they were enclosed would permit, employing their heads in the Breton fashion, and leaving Antonio to pursue his course in peace, free from all impediment, and disembarassed of both rivals, whilst they, rolling one over the other, in default of feet and hands, the use of which was denied them, contented themselves with biting with all the strength which their capacious jaws were capable of.

During this time the triumphant Antonio reached the winning-post and gained the umbrella, which was forthwith handed to him, and which he incontinently displayed to the admiring eyes of the assembled coloured population, all envying the good fortune of the lucky individual who was so happy as to possess such a treasure.

Bijou and Telemachus who, during this interval, had continued their deadly struggle, were now separated. Bijou got off minus a small portion of his nose, and Telemachus with considerable damage done to his left ear.

It was now the turn of the pony race. Thirty little animals, all of them originally from Timor and Pegu, issued forth from the reserved ground, ridden by Indian, Madagascan, and Malay jockeys. Their appearance was greeted with a universal buzz of applause, for this race was also one of those exhibitions peculiarly acceptable to the tastes of the black population of the island. In fact these little animals, half wild and almost utterly untameable as they are, offer from their independence much more interest than ordinary race-horses. A thousand voices were therefore raised at the same moment, encouraging the coloured jockeys under whom this troop of little demons bounded, calling into play all the skill and strength of their riders to restrain them, and threatening in their impatience not to await the signal, should it be delayed even for a few moments. The governor accordingly waved his hand and the signal was given.

All started or rather flew along the course, for they

seemed much more like a flock of birds skimming along the surface, than a troop of quadrupeds touching the earth. But scarcely had they arrived in front of the Malartic tomb, when, according to their usual custom, they began to bolt, and half of them soon disappeared in the black woods, carrying their cavaliers with them, despite all the endeavours of the latter to keep them in the Champ de Mars. At the bridges, the third part of those that remained disappeared in their turn, so that on their approaching the distance-post there were left but seven or eight, and of these, two or three having disembarrassed themselves of their riders, were now running without any jockey to guide them.

As the race consisted of two circuits of the course, they passed the winning-post without stopping, like a cloud of dust carried along by the wind, then turning the corner all disappeared. Soon loud shouts were heard, then bursts of laughter, which were succeeded by a momentary silence, during which all listened in vain. The horses had totally disappeared, with the exception of one which still continued on the course. All the rest had bolted, some into the woods of the Château d'Eau, others into the neighbouring rivulets, and others again at the bridge. Ten minutes passed thus.

Then all at once on the brow of the hill one horse appeared, but without a rider. The animal had entered the city, passed round the church, and returned by one of the streets opening on the Champ de Mars, and now continued his course, guided solely by his own instinct, whilst at intervals behind him might be seen the others returning on all sides, but returning too late, for in the twinkling of an eye the first who had re-appeared had crossed the space which separated him from the goal, passed it by about fifty paces, and finally stopped of his own accord, as if he had felt convinced that he had won the race.

The prize, as we have said, was a beautiful double-barrelled Manton, which was handed to the proprietor of the intelligent animal, a colonist of the name of Saunders. During this time the others had arrived from all

sides like a flock of pigeons who had been alarmed by a sparrow-hawk, and were now returning one by one to the dove-cot. Out of the entire number there were some seven or eight whose owners did not succeed in recovering them until the next day.

Now came on *the* race of the day, in consequence of which there was a rest of half an hour. During this time lists of horses and riders were distributed, and bets to a large amount were offered and taken.

Among the highest betters was Captain Van den Brock. On pulling ashore from his brigantine he had proceeded straight to the shop of Vigier, the first goldsmith and jeweller in the city, and in exchange for about a hundred thousand francs' worth of diamonds, had received bank-notes and gold; he consequently was able to show a good front, even before the most adventurous of the sportsmen betting to the last farthing, and what was more surprising, staking all upon a horse whose name even was unknown in the isle, and which was called Bayard.

There were four horses entered on the list :—

Restoration . . . Colonel Draper.

Virginie . . . M. Rondeau de Courcy.

Jester . . . M. Henri de Malmedie.

Bayard . . . M. ** (The name was replaced by two stars.)

The favourites were Jester and Restoration, who in the preceding year's races had won the honours of the day. On this occasion even more was expected from them, ridden as they were by their owners, both first-rate horsemen. As to Virginie, this was her first time of running.

Meanwhile, despite the charitable warnings which he received that he was acting like a madman, our friend Captain Van den Brock continued to back Bayard, a circumstance which excited in a still higher degree the public curiosity respecting the horse and his unknown rider.

As the horses were to be ridden by their owners, ~~the~~ *cavaliers* were not to be weighed; no astonishment there.

fore was manifested at not seeing under the saddling tent either Bayard or the gentleman who concealed himself under the hieroglyphics which replaced his name, and all supposed that at the moment of starting he would appear and take his place in the same rank with his three rivals.

In fact, at the moment when horses and riders issued forth from the tent, the individual who since the lists had been distributed had been the object of general curiosity, was seen approaching in the direction of the Malabar camp; but his appearance, instead of solving all doubts, increased them. He was dressed in an Egyptian costume, the embroideries of which could be perceived under a burnoos which concealed the greater portion of his features, and was mounted in the Arab manner, that is to say with short stirrups, and his horse was caparisoned in the Turkish fashion. At the first sight, however, it was evident to all that the rider was a finished horseman; as for Bayard (for no one doubted for an instant that it was the horse entered under this name that he rode), his slender limbs, fine coat, high breeding, and the easy and firm seat of his rider, appeared to justify the confidence which Captain Van den Brock reposed in him.

No one recognised either horse or rider, but as they were necessarily entered on the governor's private list, and consequently not unknown to him, the incognito of the new arrival was respected; one person only, perhaps, guessed who this stranger was, and leaned forward, blushing as she did so, to assure herself of the truth of her supposition. This person was Sara.

The competitors were placed in line, to the number of four only as we have said, for the reputation acquired by Jester and Restoration had kept all other competitors at a distance; every one imagined therefore that the race would be decided between these two.

As there was but one race in which gentlemen riders were to figure, the judges had decided that, in order that the pleasure of the spectators should last the longer, the horses should make the circuit of the course twice

in place of once; each horse had therefore to run a distance of three miles, a circumstance which gave a great advantage to those possessed of the most strength and muscle.

At a given signal a beautiful start took place, but as we all know, under similar circumstances the start is nothing. At about half-way round the first turn, Virginie, who, as we mentioned, ran for the first time, had gained an advance of nearly thirty paces, Bayard lying well up to her, whilst Restoration and Jester brought up the rear, visibly held back by their riders. At the brow of the hill, that is to say at about two-thirds of the distance, Bayard had gained half-a-length, whilst Restoration and Jester had pulled up about ten paces nearer; in this position they swept by the stand, all the spectators leaning forward, clapping their hands, and encouraging the riders, when, either by chance or intentionally, Sara let fall her bouquet. The stranger saw it, and without slackening his speed, he let himself slip round almost under the belly of his horse, in the manner of the Arabian horsemen in the game of the djerid, and with wonderful address picked up the fallen bouquet, saluted its beautiful owner, and continued his course, having lost nearly ten lengths which he appeared perfectly indifferent about regaining.

In the middle of the second round Virginie was overtaken by Restoration, followed at about a length's distance by Jester, whilst Bayard still kept seven or eight strides behind; but as his rider pressed him neither with whip nor spur, the spectators considered that this little delay signified nothing, and that the distance lost might be regained whenever the rider should think proper. At the bridges Restoration stumbled over a flint and fell with his rider, who, having still kept his stirrups, endeavoured to recover him by hand and rein. The noble animal made a desperate effort, half rose, but fell again almost immediately: he had broken his leg.

The three remaining competitors pursued their course, Jester leading, followed at about two length's distance by Virginie, Bayard still a good third. But at the hill

Virginie began to lose ground, Jester still maintaining his advantage, whilst Bayard, without any perceptible effort, gradually crept up. Arrived at the distance-post, Bayard was but one length behind his rival, and Henri, feeling himself pushed, commenced punishing Jester. The twenty-five thousand spectators of this brilliant race now began to applaud loudly, waving their handkerchiefs in the air, and by every means in their power encouraging the competitors. At this moment the stranger, leaning forward over the neck of his steed, pronounced a few words in the Arabic language, and immediately the intelligent animal, as if he had understood his master, redoubled his speed. They had now arrived within about twenty-five lengths of the winning-post and in front of the first stand, Jester still about a head in front of Bayard, when the stranger, finding that there was no more time to be lost, touched his horse with the spur, at the same moment rising in his stirrups and casting back his hood upon his shoulders.

"M. Henri de Malmedie," said he to his adversary, "for two insults offered me I return you only one, but one which I trust may be considered equivalent to your two." And raising his arm at these words, George, for it was he, cut the face of Henri de Malmedie with a blow of his whip; then, burying his spurs into the flanks of his steed, he dashed forward and passed the winning-post, gaining the race by two lengths, but in place of stopping to claim the prize he continued his career, and amid the general amazement disappeared among the woods which surround the Malartic tomb.

George was right: in exchange for the two insults which had been offered him by M. de Malmedie, after an interval of fourteen years, he had now returned him only one, but that one a terrible, public, and disgraceful one, moreover, which would decide his future destiny, for it was not only a provocation offered to a rival, but a declaration of war to the entire white population.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAIZA.

GEORGE having retired on his return home into the apartment which he had furnished for himself in his father's house at Moka, was reflecting on the position in which he now found himself placed, when a domestic announced that a negro was without and requested to speak to him. Naturally supposing that it was some message from Henri de Malmedie, he desired him to be admitted.

At the first sight of the individual who now entered the apartment, George felt that he was mistaken; he had a vague recollection of having met this man somewhere, although he was unable to say where or when.

"You do not recognise me?" said the negro.

"No," replied George, "and yet we have met before, have we not?"

"Twice," replied the negro.

"Where?"

"The first time at the Black River, where you saved the young lady's life; the second——"

"You are right," interrupted George, "I recollect now—and the second?"

"The second time," interrupted the negro in his turn, "was when you restored myself and my brother to liberty. I am called Laïza, and my brother, Nazim."

"And what has become of your brother?"

"Nazim, a slave, had sought by flight to return to Anjouan. Nazim, free (thanks to you), has left the island, and ought by this time to be with our father. In his name I thank you!"

"And although free you have remained," said George, inquiringly; "that is strange."

"You will soon understand my reason," said the negro, with a smile.

"Let me hear it," returned George, who in spite of himself began to take an interest in the conversation.

"I am the son of a chief," replied the negro; "I am

of the mingled blood of the Arab and Zanguebar races; I was not born therefore to be a slave."

George smiled at the negro's pride, without reflecting that this pride was but the younger brother of his own.

The negro continued, without seeing or at least remarking this smile.

"The chief of Querimbo took me prisoner in war and sold me to a slave-dealer, who in his turn disposed of me to M. de Malmedie. I offered, if they were willing to send a slave to Anjouan, to re-purchase my liberty at the price of twenty pounds' weight of gold dust. They would not believe the word of a negro and refused my offer. For some time I importuned them, then a change took place in my life, and I thought no more of leaving the island."

"M. de Malmedie perhaps treated you according to your merits?" observed George.

"No, it was not that," replied the negro. "Three years afterwards my brother Nazim was taken in his turn and sold like myself, and haply to the same master; but not having the same reasons for remaining that I had, he endeavoured to escape. You know the rest, since it was you who saved him. I loved my brother as I would my own child, and you," continued the negro, crossing his hands over his breast with a slight inclination of the head, "I love now as a father. Now this is the state of affairs; listen, for it interests you as well as us. In this island there are eighty thousand men of colour and twenty thousand whites."

"I have counted them already," said George, smiling.

"I doubted it not," replied Laïza.

"Of these eighty thousand, seventy thousand at least are in a condition to bear arms, while the whites, including the eight hundred British soldiers in the garrison, can scarcely number four thousand fighting men.

"I am aware of that also," said George.

"Well, can you not guess my meaning?" said Laïza.

"I await your explanation."

"Oh! we have made up our minds to disembarass ourselves of the whites. We have suffered enough to have, thank God, the right of avenging ourselves."

"Well?" inquired George.

"Well, we are prepared," answered Laiza.

"What stops you, then, and why do you not avenge yourselves?"

"We require a chief, or rather two have been proposed to us, but neither one nor other is fitted for such an enterprise."

"Their names?"

"The first is Antonio, the Malay."

A smile of disdain wandered for an instant over George's lips.

"And the other?" demanded he.

"The other is myself," replied Laiza.

George gazed steadfastly in the face of this man who had given the whites so strange an example of modesty, by recognising himself as unworthy of the post to which he was called.

"The other is yourself?" resumed the young man.

"Yes," replied the negro, "but we cannot have two chiefs in such an enterprise, we must have one alone."

"Ha!" exclaimed George, who fancied he had discovered that Laiza aspired to the supreme command.

"We require one absolute and powerful chief, whose superiority cannot be called in question."

"But where are you to find this man?" demanded George.

"He is already found," replied Laiza, looking steadfastly at the young mulatto; "the only question is, will he accept the command?"

"He risks his head," observed George.

"And we—do we risk nothing?" demanded Laiza.

"But what guarantee will you give him?"

"The same that he will offer us, a past of persecution and slavery, a future of vengeance and liberty."

"And what plan have you conceived?"

"To-morrow, after the festival of the Yamsé, when the whites, fatigued with the pleasures of the day, shall have retired to their homes, the Lascars, after having seen the gonhn burned, will remain alone on the banks of the *Lataniens* river; then from all sides will flock in

Africans, Malays, Madagascans, Malabars, Indians, all those in short who have entered into the conspiracy, in order that they may there elect a chief, which chief shall direct their further movements. Well, say the word, and this chief shall be yourself."

"And who has charged you to make this proposition to me?" demanded George.

Laïza smiled disdainfully.

"None one," said he.

"Then the idea emanates from yourself alone?"

"Yes."

"And who or what has inspired you with it?"

"You yourself."

"How! I myself?"

"You cannot attain your desires but through us."

"And who told you that I desired anything?"

"You desire to wed the Rose of the Black River, and you hate M. Henri de Malmedie! You desire to possess the one, and you seek to avenge yourself on the other! We alone can offer you the means, for they will not consent to give you the one for a bride, nor will they permit the other to become your adversary."

"And who told you that I love Sara?"

"I have seen it."

"You deceive yourself."

Laïza shook his head with an expression of melancholy.

"The eyes of the head deceive, sometimes," replied he; "those of the heart never."

"Can you be my rival?" demanded George, with a disdainful smile.

"That man only is a rival who has the hope of being loved," replied the negro with a sigh, "and the Rose of the Black River will never love the Lion of Anjouan."

"You are not jealous, then?"

"You have saved her life, and her life belongs to you; it is but just; I have not had even the happiness of dying for her, and yet," added the negro, again fixing a steady glance upon George, "think you that I did what was necessary for that?"

"Yes, yes," murmured George, "yes, you are brave; but the others—can I count upon them?"

"I can only answer for myself," said Laïza, "but for myself I *will* answer; all that any one can do with a courageous, faithful, and devoted man, you can do with me."

"You will obey me as your chief?"

"In all things."

"Even in what regards"—George interrupted himself, and looked at Laïza.

"Even in what may regard the Rose of the Black River," said the negro, completing the young man's thought.

"But from whence comes this devotion to me?"

"The Stag of Anjouan was about to die under the blows of his executioners, and you purchased his life. The Lion of Anjouan was in chains, and you restored him to freedom. The lion is not only the strongest, but the most generous of animals, and it is because he is both strong and generous," continued the negro, crossing his arms on his breast and raising his head proudly, "that Laïza was called the Lion of Anjouan."

"Tis well," said George, offering his hand to the negro; "I ask one day to decide."

"And what circumstances will influence your decision?"

"I have to-day insulted—grievously, publicly, mortally insulted—M. de Malmedie."

"I know it; I was there," said the negro.

"If M. de Malmedie fights with me, I have nothing more to say."

"And if he refuses to fight?" demanded Laïza, with a smile.

"Then I am yours; for as he is known to be brave, having already fought two duels, in one of which he killed his adversary, he will have added a third insult to the two already offered me, and then the measure will be full."

"Then you will be our chief," said Laïza; "the white man will never fight with the mulatto."

George knit his brow at these words, for they were only the echo of his own thoughts. "But then," said he, "how can the white man brook the stigma of shame which the mulatto has imprinted on his cheek?"

At this moment Telemachus entered the room, his hand upon his ear,—of which member Bijou, as we have mentioned, had carried off a portion in the combat on the race-course.

"Massa," said he, "the Dutch captain is outside and wishes to speak to you."

"Captain Van den Brock?" inquired George.

"Yes, massa."

"Very well," said George; then turning towards Laïza: "wait for me here," said he, "I shall return directly; my reply will be in all probability sooner given than I had at first hoped."

George left the room in which Laïza was, and with open arms entered the apartment in which the captain was awaiting him.

"Well brother," said the captain, "so you recognised me,—eh?"

"Yes, Jacques, and I am delighted to see you, especially at this moment."

"You were within a very little of not having had that pleasure this voyage, I can tell you."

"How so?"

"I must be off."

"Why?"

"The governor appears to me to have all the air of an old sea fox."

"Say rather a wolf—a sea tiger, Jacques; the governor is the famous Commodore William Murray, the former captain of the Leicester."

"Of the Leicester! I ought to have suspected it; in that case we have an old score to settle, and I can understand it all."

"What has happened then?"

"Why, it happened that the governor after the races came up to me very graciously and said, 'Captain

VandenBrock, that is a very pretty brigantine of yours.' So far there was nothing marked, but he added, 'May I have the honour of paying you a visit to-morrow?' "

"He suspected something."

"Yes, and I, blockhead that I was, suspected nothing; so I must needs go and ask him to breakfast on board to-morrow morning, which invitation he accepted."

"Well ? "

"Well, as I was returning from ordering certain things on shore for this said breakfast, I perceived that they were making signals out towards sea from Mount Discovery. It then struck me as just possible that these signals might be being made in my honour. Accordingly I ascended the hill and swept the horizon with my glass, and, sure enough, twenty miles out at sea there was a ship replying to these signals."

"It was the Leicester."

"Not the least doubt of it ; they want to catch me in a trap, but you must know that Jacques did not come into the world yesterday. The wind is now sou'-sou'-cast, so that the frigate will have to beat up to Port Louis; consequently she cannot be off the Ile des Tonneliers, for at least twelve hours. In the meantime I shall up anchor and away, and I have come to seek you and endeavour to persuade you to accompany me."

"I ! and why should I go ? "

"Oh ! by-the-by I forgot all about that. I say, what the devil put it into your head to cut that young fellow's face with your whip ? That was hardly polite of you, eh ? "

"Do you not know then who this man is ? "

"Of course I do, since I bet a thousand louis against him. By-the-way, that Bayard of yours is a devilish fine animal, and you must give him a thousand compliments from me."

"Well then do you not recollect that this same Henri de Malmedie, fourteen years ago, the day of the battle

"Well ? "

George parted the hair from his forehead and showed his brother the scar.

"Ah yes, that's true," cried Jacques; "but confound it, my dear fellow, you bear malice, eh? I had forgotten all about that story. But after all, if I recollect aright, this little attention on his part cost him a certain blow on the face which was well worth his sabre cut."

"Yes, and I had therefore forgotten this first insult; or rather I was prepared to forgive it, when he offered me a second."

"What was that?"

"He refused me the hand of his cousin."

"Oh, upon my honour that's not bad! Here are a father and son who have for the last fourteen years been bringing up an heiress, like a pullet in a coop, in order to pluck her at their ease by a good marriage; and just at the moment when she is fattened to the proper degree, up starts a poacher and seeks to get her for himself. Come, come!—what could they do otherwise than refuse you? Besides, remember, my dear fellow, that we are nothing but mulattoes after all."

"It is not altogether this refusal that I consider as an insult, but in the discussion he raised his cane over me."

"Ah! there he was wrong. And so you knocked him down, eh?"

"Not exactly," replied George, laughing at the means of conciliation which, under similar circumstances, always presented itself to his brother's mind; "no, I demanded satisfaction."

"And he refused you? Of course he did; we are mulattoes; we fight the whites sometimes, but the whites never fight us. Oh fie, fie!"

"And then I promised him that I would make him fight me."

"And it was for that reason that you gave him, on the open race-course, *coram populo* as we used to say at the Collège Napoléon, a cut of your whip across the face. It was not a bad idea, and your plan was very nearly being successful."

"Nearly being successful! How do you mean?"

"Why, I mean to say that most certainly M. de Malmedie's first idea was to fight you, but he could get no one to act as his second. His friends declared that such a duel would be quite out of the question."

"Then he will keep the cut across the face I have given him; he is welcome."

"Yes, but they have got something in store for you."

"And what have they got for me, pray?" said George, frowning slightly.

"Why, as, notwithstanding all they could say, the mad-cap wished absolutely to fight you, it was necessary in order to get him to give up this duel, that they should promise him something."

"And what did they promise him?"

"That one of those evenings eight or ten fellows should lie in wait for you on your way home from Port Louis when you least expected it, lay you on a ladder, and give you twenty-five lashes."

"The wretches! Why it is the punishment of a negro."

"Well! what are we mulattoes? white negroes, nothing more."

"And they promised that, did they?" repeated George.

"Positively."

"You are sure of it?"

"I was there; they took me for a brave Dutchman, a thorough-bred Meinherr, and did not suspect me in the least."

"It is well," replied George; "my mind is made up."

"You go with me?"

"I remain."

"Listen," said Jacques, placing his hand upon George's shoulder, "take my advice, brother—follow the counsel of an old philosopher; do not remain here, come with me."

"Impossible! It would have the appearance of flight; besides I love Sara."

"You love Sara! What do you mean by that?"

"I mean to say, that I shall win her or perish."

"Listen to me, George; I repeat to you that you are

in the wrong. I start to-night at twelve o'clock without beat of drum or sound of trumpet; come with me, and to-morrow we shall be twenty-five leagues from this, and may laugh at all the whites in the Mauritius. And I promise you, that if we should fall in with any of your friends, four of my sailors shall administer to them the gratification they had in store for you."

"Thanks, brother," repeated George; "but it is impossible."

"Well then I shall say no more; you are a man, and when a man says it is impossible, it means that it really cannot be. I shall sail then without you."

"Yes, go, but do not go too far, and perhaps you may see something you do not expect."

"And what shall I see, pray? an eclipse of the moon?"

"You shall see—lighted up from the pass of Denorrie to Morne Brabant, and from Port Louis to Mahébourg—a volcano equal to that of the Isle of Bourbon."

"Ah ha! this is quite another affair; you have got some pyrotechnical ideas in your head, it appears. Come, explain all this to me."

"I mean to say, that in eight days these whites who threaten and despise me—these whites who seek to treat me as a runaway slave, shall be at my feet, that is all."

"A little revolt—I understand," said Jacques; "such a thing might be possible if there were in the island only two thousand men like my one hundred and fifty Lascars;—I say Lascars from habit, for, thank Heaven! there is not a man of my crew belonging to that miserable race. They are all good Bretons, brave Americans, true Dutchmen, and pure Spaniards,—the very pick of the four nations. But you! what men have you got to support the revolt?"

"Ten thousand slaves who are tired of obeying, and who desire to command in their turn."

"Negroes, pah!" said Jacques, disdainfully thrusting out his under lip. "Listen to me, George; I know these fellows well, I deal in them; they support heat well, they will live on a few bananas, and they will

work hard; they have several good qualities without doubt—I do not wish to depreciate my merchandise—but they make poor soldiers, depend upon it. Why, no later than to-day at the races, the governor asked me my opinion of negroes.”

“How was that?”

“Yes; he said to me, ‘Captain Van den Brock, you have travelled much and appear to me an excellent observer; now suppose there should be such a thing as a revolt of the slaves in an island of which you were governor, what would you do?’”

“And what did you answer?”

“I said to him, ‘My lord, I will tell you what I should do; I should merely broach about an hundred puncheons of rum in the streets through which they were to pass, and go to bed quietly with the key in the street door.’”

George bit his lips till the blood came.

“So then for the third time I repeat to you brother, come with me, it is by far the best thing you can do.”

“And I for the third time reply to you brother, impossible.”

“Then there is no more to be said; shake hands, George.”

“Good-bye, Jacques.”

“Farewell, George; but take my advice, do not trust to the blacks.”

“So you are absolutely going?”

“Pardieu! yes. Oh, there is no pride about me, and I know how to make myself scarce when necessity requires. I shall put to sea, and if the Leicester wishes to have a game of nine-pins with me there, well and good, I shall not balk her. But in port, under the fire of Fort Blanc, and the redoubt of Labourdonnaie—thank you!

“So for the last time you refuse?”

“I refuse.”

“Adieu then.”

“Adieu!” and the young men embraced each other for the last time. Jacques then entered the apartment.

of his father, who, in ignorance of all that had happened, was sleeping tranquilly. As to George, he passed into the chamber where Laiza awaited him.

"Well?" demanded the negro.

"Well," said George, "you may inform the insurgents that they have a chief."

The negro crossed his arms over his breast, and without uttering another word, bowed low and retired.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE YAMSE.

THE races, as we have previously said, were but an episode in the second day's amusements; consequently, about three o'clock in the afternoon, as soon as the races were over, the whole of that parti-coloured population which covered the Little Mountain, began to move forward towards the green plains, whilst the fashionables who had assisted at the sport returned home to dinner in carriages and on horseback, purposing however to take the field soon after their repast, in order to be present at the exercises of the Lascars.

These exercises consist of symbolical gymnastics, composed of races, dances, and fights, and accompanied with discordant songs and strains of barbarous music. With these are mingled the clamorous shouts of the negroes, trafficking on their own or their master's account, who keep constantly circulating among the crowd, some crying out, "Bananas, bananas!" others, "Fine canes, ripe canes!" others, "Curds and whey! fine milk curds!" and others again, "Calou! good calou!"

These games last until six o'clock in the evening, at which hour the little procession, so called in order to distinguish it from the grand procession of the following day, commences.

And now, between two ranks of spectators, the Lascars advance, some half-hidden under a sort of little painted pagodas, constructed on the model of the great

gouhn, and which they call *aïdorés*; others armed with laths and broken swords; and others again half-naked, clad only in a few tattered garments. Then at a given signal all dart forward; those who bear the *aïdorés* begin to turn round and round in a sort of fantastic dance; the sword and stick-bearers begin their mock combats, wheeling round each other and dealing and parrying blows with marvellous dexterity and address; and lastly, the tattered personages beat their breasts with their clenched fists, and roll about on the ground with all the appearance of despair, crying aloud, sometimes in regular succession, sometimes all together, the words; "Yamsé! Yamli! O Hosein, O Ali!"

Whilst they devote themselves to these religious gymnastics, some of them go round the crowd offering to all comers a dish of rice boiled with aromatic herbs. This ceremony lasts till midnight, at which hour they return to the Malabar camp in the same order in which they set out, not to leave it until the following evening.

But on the following day the scene changes and increases in attraction. After having performed the same circuit through the city as they did the previous evening, the Lascars re-enter the camp in order to seek the *gouhn*,—this year the joint production of the two bands and consequently larger and more splendid than it had ever been before. It was covered with the richest, most brilliant, and most glaring-coloured papers, lighted up within by great masses of fire, and without by innumerable paper lanterns of all colours suspended from every angle and pinnacle of its pointed architecture, and casting upon its vast sides torrents of changing light. It advanced slowly, borne by a great number of men, some placed in the interior, others outside, and all chaunting a sort of monotonous and doleful hymn. In front of the *gouhn* marched the illuminators, bearing, at the end of a pole twelve feet in length, lanterns, torches, suns, and other pieces of fire-works. Then commenced again more vigorously than ever the dances of the *aïdorés* and the combats of the sword and stick-

bearers. The devotees with the torn robes recommenced striking their breasts and uttering their cries of grief and despair, to which the entire body of Lascars replied by alternate shouts, still more piercing and further prolonged than those of the preceding evening, of: "Yamsé! Yamli! O Hosein! O Ali!"

The celebrated gouhn which on this occasion accompanied the procession, was intended to represent at the same time the city of Kerbelo, near which Hosein perished, and the tomb which enclosed his remains. In addition to this there marched in the procession a naked man, his skin painted in imitation of a tiger's hide, intended to represent the miraculous lion which during several days watched over the remains of the holy Imatun. From time to time he darted towards the spectators, uttering frightful roarings as if he sought to destroy them; but a man representing a keeper, who walked behind him, would on these occasions check his ferocity by means of a cord, whilst a mollah placed before him would calm him with a series of mysterious words and magnetic signs and gestures.

During several hours they led the gouhn in grand procession through and around the city, after which those who bore it took the way towards the Lataniers river, followed by the entire population of Port Louis. The festival drew towards its close, they were about to enter the gouhn, and all were desirous, after having accompanied it in its triumph, to follow it also to its tomb. On reaching the Lataniers river those who bore the huge machine stopped upon the bank. Then precisely at the hour of midnight four men, each bearing in his hand a lighted torch, approached and set fire to the four corners. At the same instant the bearers let the gouhn fall into the river.

But as the Lataniers river is only a mountain stream, and as the base of the gouhn scarcely dipped into the water, the flames gained rapidly upon all the upper portion, darting upwards and ascending in columns of whirling flames to the very skies. The scene that ensued was wild and singular in the extreme. By the

light of this ephemeral but vivid flame, might be seen this crowd of nearly thirty thousand spectators uttering shouts and cries in every conceivable language, and waving in the air hats, scarfs, and handkerchiefs. Detached groups, some in the river itself, others on the surrounding rocks, some collected together in a sombre mass scarcely to be distinguished from the shadows of the adjoining wood, some mounted, some in palanquins and carriages, and others again on horseback, closed in this immense circle. During a few moments the water reflected the ruddy glare which it was so soon to stifle in its cold embrace. The vast multitude howled like a raging sea, the trees protruded their huge branches from the depths of shade like awakening giants, and the heavens were seen only through a crimson vapour which caused each passing cloud to resemble a wave of blood.

Then the lights soon began to fade away, all these heads became blended together, the trees appeared to separate and return again into the shade, the sky became pale, resuming by degrees its leaden tint, and piles of clouds succeeded each other, each more sombre than its predecessor. From time to time some portion of the edifice, spared until now by the conflagration, would blaze up in its turn, casting upon the landscape and the crowds of spectators by which it was peopled, a pale and vacillating light; then dying away suddenly would render the obscurity even more dense than it had been before. By degrees all the frame-work fell in glowing fragments, hissing as they touched the waters of the stream. At length the last sparks were extinguished, and as the sky, as we have said, was charged with clouds, the spectators found themselves in an obscurity all the more profound from the contrast it presented to the brilliant light which had preceded it.

Then took place what always occurs at the termination of public festivals, and particularly after illuminations or fire-works: a loud hum of voices arose, and all, talking, laughing, joking, made the best of their way to the city; the carriages starting off at the full speed of their horses, the palanquins at the round trot of their

bearers, whilst the foot passengers, collected together in chattering groups, took their way homewards as quickly as their legs would carry them. Whether from a more lively curiosity, or the natural love of idleness and gossiping peculiar to the race, the negroes and men of colour remained the last upon the spot; but at length they also departed in their turn, some taking the road to the Malabar camp, others burying themselves in the depths of the forest, and others again pursuing the path along the sea shore. In a few moments the place was entirely deserted, and a quarter of an hour elapsed during which not a sound could be heard save the murmuring of the stream as it eddied round the projecting rocks, and nothing could be seen, in the momentary gleams of light which shone between the passing clouds, but a few gigantic and heavy-flying bats, which would occasionally stoop towards the river as if to extinguish with their long wings the few pieces of smouldering charcoal which still floated on its surface, and dart up the next moment from the stream and lose themselves in the recesses of the forest.

Soon however a slight rustling was heard, and two men were seen advancing towards the river from opposite directions, one proceeding from the side of the Battery Dumas, and the other from the Long Mountain. When they had reached the opposite banks of the river, both rose to their feet and exchanged signs, one clapping his hands together thrice, whilst the other whistled in a low tone the same number of times. Then from the recesses of the woods, from the angles of the fortifications, from the rocks which bordered the river, and from the mangrove bushes which lined its banks, might be seen issuing stealthily forth an immense throng of negroes and Indians, whose presence but five minutes before it would have been impossible to suspect.

This promiscuous crowd was divided into two distinct bands, the one composed of none but Indians, the other entirely of negroes. The Indians ranged themselves round one of the two chiefs who had first arrived: this chief was a man with a deep olive com-

plexion, and spoke in the Malay idiom. The negroes encircled the other chief, who was a negro like themselves, and who spoke by turns the Madagascan and the Mozambique dialects. One of the two chiefs strode hastily up and down through the crowd, chattering, scolding, declaiming, gesticulating, the true type of the demagogue of the lower orders, of the vulgar-minded *intrigant*—it was Antonio the Malay. The other—calm, still, almost mute, sparing of words, sober in gesture—seemed to attract every gaze without seeking it, the true image of that strength which restrains and that genius which commands—it was Laiza, the Lion of Anjouan. These two men were the chiefs of the revolt; the ten thousand half-castes by whom they were surrounded were the conspirators.

Antonio spoke first:—

“There was once on a time,” he began, “an island governed by apes and inhabited by elephants, lions, tigers, panthers, and serpents. The number of those governed was ten times greater than that of the governors; but these rulers had the talent, cunning baboons that they were, of disuniting their subjects, so that the elephants lived at variance with the lions, the tigers with the panthers, and the serpents with all. The result was, that whenever the elephants raised their trunks, the apes would make the serpents, panthers, tigers, and lions march against them, and strong as were the elephants they were always vanquished; if again it was the lions that roared, the apes brought up against them elephants, serpents, panthers, and tigers, so that no matter how courageous the lions might be, the result always was that they were again enchained; if it was the tigers who showed their teeth, the apes marched against them the elephants, lions, serpents, and panthers, so that the tigers were soon compelled again to enter their cages; if the panthers jumped too high, the apes forthwith led against them all the other animals, so that skilful as were the panthers they were always reduced to submission; and lastly, if the serpents hissed too loudly, the apes would despatch

against them the rest of their fellow-subjects, so that the serpents, cunning as they were, ever found that they had they worst of it. The result was, that the governors, with whom this stratagem had already succeeded a hundred times, laughed in their sleeves whenever they heard that there was going to be a revolt, and forthwith employing their usual tactics, would stifle the conspiracy at once. Matters went on in this way for a long time—oh! a very long time indeed!

“But one day it happened that a serpent, more cunning than the others, reflected upon these things. Now this was a serpent who knew his four rules of arithmetic, aye that he did, just as well as the book-keeper of M——; and he calculated that the apes were in proportion to the other animals as is one to eight. Then, under pretence of a festival, he called together the whole body of elephants, lions, tigers, panthers, and serpents, and said to them: ‘How many of you are there here altogether?’

“The animals counted themselves over, and replied, ‘We are eighty thousand.’

“‘Very good,’ said the serpent. ‘Now count your masters, and tell me how many they are.’

“The animals counted the apes, and replied, ‘They number eight thousand.’

“‘Then how silly you must be not to unite together, and exterminate these apes, since you are ten to one.’

“The animals forthwith united together, and did exterminate the apes, and became in consequence masters of the island; and then the most beautiful fruits of the island were theirs, the fairest fields afforded them pasturage, the richest forests bestowed on them their graceful shades, and the finest mansions a covering in the rainy seasons; without reckoning the apes whom they made slaves, and their daughters who became their handmaidens. Do you understand?” said Antonio.

Loud shouts were heard on all sides, huzzas and bravos issued from every mouth. Antonio had produced with his fable no less effect than the Consul Menenius produced with his, some centuries before.

Laïza waited patiently until this outburst of enthusiasm had died away. Then, extending his hand to command silence, he uttered these simple words:—

“There was formerly an island in which the slaves wished to be free; they arose as one man and obtained their freedom. This island was formerly named Saint Domingo. It is now called the Republic of Hayti. Let us, my friends, act like them, and like them we shall also be free.”

This time also loud shouts responded to the address, and again were heard bravos and hurrahs, although it must be confessed that this discourse was too simple, to move the multitude as powerfully as Antonio's. Antonio perceived this and immediately conceived a hope. He made a sign that he wished to speak, and there was at once a dead silence.

“Yes,” said he, “yes, Laïza has spoken the truth. I have heard that there is, far away beyond Africa, towards the setting sun, a great island in which all the negroes are kings. But in my isle as well as in that of Laïza, in the island of animals as in that of men, there was a chief elected, and but one only.”

“It is just,” said Laïza, “and Antonio is right; all power divided, weakens itself. I am therefore of his opinion, we must choose a chief, and only one.”

“And who shall be this chief?” demanded Antonio.

“It is for those who are here assembled to decide that question,” replied Laïza.

“The man who is worthy to be our chief,” said Antonio, “is one who must be able to oppose stratagem to stratagem, force to force, courage to courage.”

“It is just,” said Laïza.

“He who is worthy of being our chief,” continued Antonio, “is the man who has lived with both whites and blacks, a man who is allied by blood with both one and the other, a man who, though free, will be ready to make the sacrifice of his liberty, the man who has a cottage and a field and who is prepared to risk the loss of both;—that is the man who is worthy of being our chief.”

"It is just," said Laiza.

"I know but one man who unites within himself all these conditions," said Antonio.

"And I also," said Laiza.

"Do you mean to say that it is yourself?" demanded Antonio.

"No," replied Laiza.

"You confess then that I am the man."

"Neither you any more than myself."

"And who is it then?" cried Antonio.

"Yes, who is it?—who is he? Let him come, let him appear!" exclaimed with one voice Indians and negroes. Laiza clapped his hands together three times. At the same instant the gallop of a horse was heard, and by the light of the first dawn of morning, the assembled multitude beheld issuing from the forest a mounted cavalier, who dashed at full speed into the very heart of the assembled groups, and there, by a simple motion of his hand, checked his horse so suddenly that the shock threw the animal back on his haunches. Laiza extended his hand with a gesture of lofty dignity towards the cavalier: "Your chief!" said he; "behold your chief!"

"George Munier!" exclaimed ten thousand voices.

"Yes, George Munier," said Laiza. "You have demanded a chief who can oppose stratagem to stratagem, force to force, courage to courage. Behold him! You have demanded a chief who has lived with whites and blacks, and is allied by blood to both races. Behold him! You have demanded a chief who should be free, and who for your sakes makes the sacrifice of his liberty, who has a cottage and a field, and who risks the loss of both. Well, this chief—behold him! Where shall you seek another, where shall you be able to find such a one?"

Antonio was confounded, all eyes were turned upon George, and there was a general buzz of voices through the multitude. George well knew the men with whom he had to deal, and he felt that he ought above all to appeal to their love of show. He was clad therefore in a magnificent burnous embroidered

with gold, under which he wore the caftan of honour, the gift of Ibrahim Pacha, upon which shone the crosses of the Legion of Honour, and Charles III. Bayard, on his side, covered with a magnificent housing of scarlet cloth, champed his silver bit and pawed the ground with quivering and impatient hoof.

"But," cried Antonio, "who will answer to us for him?"

"I will," said Laiza.

"Has he lived with us? does he know our wishes and our wants?"

"No, he has not lived with us, but he has lived with the whites, whose science he has studied. Yes, he knows our desires and our wants, for we have but one desire, one want—Liberty!"

"Let him begin then by restoring his own three hundred slaves to freedom."

"It has been already done this morning," said George.

"Yes, yes," cried several voices in the crowd, "yes, we free, massa George he give us all liberty."

"But he is connected with the whites," said Antonio.

"I declare before you all," replied George, "that I broke with them yesterday."

"But he loves a white girl," said Antonio.

"And that is but another triumph for us men of colour," replied George, "for the white girl loves me."

"But if they should offer her to him for wife," rejoined Antonio, "he would betray us and would treat with the whites."

"If they were to offer her to me for wife, I should refuse her," replied George; "for I wish to possess her from herself alone, and I do not require any one to give her to me."

Antonio endeavoured to urge some fresh objection, but loud shouts of "Long live George! long live our chief!" resounded on all sides, and drowned his voice so completely that not a word could be heard. George made a sign that he wished to speak, and immediately there was profound silence.

"My friends," said he, "the daylight approaches, and consequently the hour for us to separate. Thursday is a holiday; on Thursday you shall all be free; on Thursday at eight o'clock in the evening, I shall be here on this spot. I shall put myself at your head, and we will march upon the city."

"Yes, yes," cried every voice.

"One word more: if there should be a traitor among us, let us decide that whenever the treason shall be discovered and proved, any one of us may put him to death on that instant, employing whatever means of death he pleases to inflict, prompt or slow, merciful or cruel. Do you submit beforehand to this judgment? As for me, I submit the first."

"Yes, yes," cried all; "if there should be a traitor let him be put to death—death to the traitor!"

"'Tis well. And now, how many are you?"

"We are ten thousand," said Laiza.

"My three hundred servants have been directed to hand each of you four piastres, for it is necessary that by Thursday evening each may be provided with some weapon. Farewell till Thursday."

And George, saluting the multitude with a wave of his hand, departed as he had come, whilst his three hundred negroes, each opening a sack of gold, handed to every individual the promised number of piastres. This act of almost royal munificence cost George Munier, it is true, a sum of two hundred thousand francs; but what was this sum to a man rich to the amount of millions, and who would have sacrificed all his fortune to the accomplishment of the project so long resolved upon. At length then this project was about to be accomplished—the gauntlet had been thrown down.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

GEORGE returned home much calmer and more tranquil in his mind than might have been supposed. He was one of those men whom inaction destroys, but who rise under difficulties and dangers. He contented himself with preparing his arms for any unforeseen attack; in which case he had reserved a means of retreat towards the great forests through whose mazes he had so often wandered in his youth, and whose vastness, filled with never-dying murmurs, to which the ocean waves added fresh cadences, had made him the thoughtful and dreamy child we have seen.

But the individual upon whom the weight of all these unforeseen events had really fallen, was the poor father. For the last fourteen years the sole desire of his life had been to see his children once more. This desire had been accomplished, he had seen both again; but their presence had but changed the habitual monotony of his life into a state of unceasing anxiety and alarm. The one, a captain of a slaver, ever at war with both elements and laws; the other, a philosophical conspirator, combating prejudices and men—both contending against the two greatest powers in the world—were liable at any moment to be crushed by the tempest; whilst he, chained down by his habit of passive obedience, beheld them advancing towards the abyss without having strength sufficient to restrain them, and possessing as his sole consolation these words, which he would constantly repeat to himself: “At least I am certain of one thing—that I shall die along with them.”

The period which was to decide the destiny of George was short; an interval of only two days separated him from that event which was to make him another Toussaint L'Ouverture or a second Petion. His sole regret during these two days was his not being able to communicate with Sara, as it would have been imprudent *for him to seek in the city for his ordinary messenger,*

Miko-Miko. But on the other hand, he felt re-assured by the inward conviction which he had, that the young girl was as certain of his constancy as he was of hers. There are some minds who only require to exchange a glance or a word to understand their mutual worth, and from that moment repose upon each other with the security of conviction. Then again he would smile at the idea of the terrible vengeance he was about to wreak upon society, and at the signal reparation which fate had in store for him. He imagined himself saying to Sara on their next meeting: "For eight days, Sara, I have not seen you, but these eight days have been sufficient for me to change, like a volcano, the face of the isle. I resolved to disperse for ever, in one great tempest, men, laws, prejudices, and I have succeeded."

There is in political and social dangers, such as those to which George exposed himself, a certain charm and intoxication which will for ever recruit the ranks of conspirators and conspiracies, and bid fair to render them perpetual. One of the strongest motives of human action is, without contradiction, the gratification of pride and ambition. In gratifying these sinful feelings, Satan, as we are aware, was hurled downwards into the abyss, and Enceladus buried. But the buried Enceladus moves a mountain every time he turns, while the fallen Satan has become king of the infernal regions. But these were arguments utterly incomprehensible to poor Pierre Munier.

So whilst George, after leaving his window half-open, hanging his pistols at the head of his bed, and placing his drawn sabre under his pillow, slept as calmly and soundly as if unconscious that he was sleeping over a powder magazine, Pierre Munier having armed five or six negroes upon whose fidelity he could rely, posted them as videttes all round the dwelling, whilst he himself took a position on the road to Moka, so that an instant retreat was thus assured to his beloved George, and he no longer ran any great risk of being surprised. But the night passed over without any alarm. It is the peculiar characteristic however of those conspiracies

which are hatched among the negroes, that the secret is always scrupulously kept. The poor creatures are not yet sufficiently civilized to calculate what they may gain by acting the traitor.

The following day passed away as the preceding night had done, and the night following as the day before; nothing whatever occurred which could lead George to suspect that he had been betrayed. Only a few hours, therefore, now separated him from the accomplishment of his design. Towards nine o'clock in the morning Laiza arrived; George sent for him immediately into his own private apartments. No change had taken place in the feelings of the people, only the enthusiasm produced by George's generosity was still increasing. At nine o'clock in the evening the ten thousand conspirators were to assemble in arms on the banks of the Lataniers river, and at ten the insurrection was to take place. Whilst George was questioning Laiza upon the dispositions of each, and discussing with him the chances of this perilous enterprise, he perceived at a distance his messenger Miko-Miko, who, still bearing on his shoulder his bamboo with its accompanying panniers, was advancing at his habitual jog-trot in the direction of the dwelling-house. It was impossible for any one to arrive more opportunely, as since the day of the races George had not once seen Sara. Master of his passions as the young man undoubtedly was, he could not refrain from opening the window and making a sign to Miko-Miko to quicken his pace, which the honest Chinese hastened to do. Laiza made a movement to retire, but George detained him, saying that he had something else to speak to him about. In fact, as George had foreseen, Miko-Miko had not come all the way to Moka on his own account; scarcely had he entered the room, when he drew from his pocket a charming little billet-doux, folded in the most aristocratic fashion, that is to say, long and narrow, and bearing as its address his Christian name only, written in a beautiful female hand. The mere sight of this billet caused George's heart to beat violently; he took it from the

hands of the messenger, and to hide his emotion—poor philosopher who dared not to be a man!—retired into the embrasure of a window to peruse its contents. The letter was indeed from Sara, and contained the following words:—

“*Mon Ami*,—To-day, about two o'clock in the afternoon, be at the residence of Lord William Murray, and you will there learn certain things which I dare not tell you, they make me so happy; then when you leave the Government-house come to me, I shall be waiting for you in our pavilion.

“Your SARA.”

George read this letter twice over; he could not understand in the least the meaning of this double rendezvous. How could Lord William Murray tell him certain things which had rendered Sara happy, and how again on leaving the Government-house, that is to say about three o'clock in the afternoon—in open day and in the sight of all—could he present himself at the house of M. de Malmédie? Miko-Miko alone could give him an explanation of this mystery. He therefore called the Chinese and began to interrogate him, but the worthy negotiator knew nothing save that Mademoiselle Sara had sent for him by Bijou, whom he did not recognise at first, seeing that in his fight with Telemachus the poor negro had lost a portion of a nose already none of the most prominent; that he had followed him, had been introduced into the presence of the young lady in the same pavilion where he had been already twice before, and there she had written the letter which he now brought, and which the intelligent messenger had very quickly divined was addressed to George. She had then given him a piece of gold, and that was all he knew about the matter. George nevertheless continued to question Miko-Miko, asking him if the young lady had indeed written it before him, if she had been alone when writing, and if her countenance appeared sad or joyful. The young lady had written in his presence; no one had been in the room; her features had announced the most entire serenity and the

most perfect happiness. While George was continuing his cross-examination, the gallop of a horse was heard approaching, the rider of which was a messenger in the governor's livery. An instant afterwards he entered the apartment and handed George a letter from Lord William. It was as follows:—

“MY DEAR FELLOW-TRAVELLER,—I have been very busily occupied in your service since I last had the pleasure of seeing you, and I flatter myself that I have not been altogether unsuccessful in the arrangement of your little affair. Be kind enough to be with me to-day at two o'clock; I shall have, I hope, some good news to give you. Ever yours, “WILLIAM MURRAY.”

These two letters coincided perfectly with each other. Consequently whatever might be the danger he would incur by presenting himself in the city in the present state of his affairs, and although prudence whispered him that to venture into Port Louis and above all into the governor's house, was, to say the least, a rash proceeding, George listened only to his pride which urged that to refuse this double rendezvous would be almost an act of cowardice, above all when these appointments were given him by the only two persons in the island whom he could thoroughly rely on, the one for her love, the other for his friendship. Accordingly, turning to the messenger, he desired him to present his respects to Lord William Murray, and to inform him that he would be with him at the hour appointed. The messenger departed with this answer. George then sat down and commenced his letter to Sara. Let us peep over his shoulder and follow with our eyes the few lines he traced:—

“DEAREST SARA,—In the first place, a thousand thanks for your letter; it is the first I have received from you, and although very short it tells me all that I wish to know—that you have not forgotten me, that you still love me, that you are mine as I am yours. I shall go to Lord William Murray's at the hour you have mentioned. Shall you be there?—you do not tell me. Alas! the only happy news that I can hear,

must come from your lips alone, since the only happiness that I can aspire to in this world, is that of being your husband. Up to the present moment I have done all in my power to attain that end; all that I shall hereafter do will have the same object in view. Remain therefore, dear Sara, firm and faithful, as I shall on my side be faithful and courageous, for near at hand as our mutual happiness may seem to you to be, I fear that before attaining that happy goal, we have both of us terrible trials to undergo. But no matter, Sara, my conviction is that nothing in this world can resist a powerful and unchangeable will and a deep and devoted love. Do you then cherish this love, Sara, and my determination shall not fail you.

“Ever your own “GEORGE.”

This letter written, George gave it into the hands of Miko-Miko, who, resuming his bamboo and panniers, took his departure for Port Louis at his habitual gait, not however without receiving the fresh gratuity which his faithful services so justly merited. George remained alone with Laiza. The latter had heard almost all that passed and understood all.

“You are going into the city then?” asked he.

“Yes,” replied George.

“It is imprudent,” rejoined the negro.

“I know it is, but I must go, and in fact I should be a coward in my own eyes if I refused.”

“’Tis well; go then; but if at ten o’clock you are not at the Lataniers River——”

“I shall either be a prisoner or dead; then do you march upon the city and deliver me, or else avenge my death.”

“It is well,” said Laiza; “rely upon us.”

And these two men who understood each other so well that a single word, a single gesture, a single pressure of the hand sufficed to render them confident in each other’s honour, parted without exchanging a promise or an injunction more.

It was now ten o'clock, and a servant entered the apartment to inform George that his father desired to know if he would breakfast with him; to which George replied by proceeding in person to the breakfast-room, as calm as if nothing had passed. Pierre Munier glanced at him with a look in which was expressed all a father's solicitude, but seeing that the countenance of his son presented its usual appearance, and recognising upon his lips the same smile which saluted him every day, he became more tranquil.

"God be praised! my dear boy," said the good man, "but seeing these messengers succeed each other so rapidly, I was fearful lest they brought you some bad news; however your tranquil air tells me that I have been mistaken."

"You are right, my dear father," replied George, "all goes on well; the revolt is still fixed for this evening at the same hour, and the messengers whom you saw, brought me two letters, one from the governor appointing to see me to day at two o'clock, the other from Sara telling me that she loves me."

Pierre Munier sat in mute amazement. It was the first time that George had spoken to him of the revolt of the negroes, the friendship of the governor, and the attachment of Sara; he had learned all these things indirectly, and the poor father trembled to his inmost soul at seeing his beloved child pursuing so dangerous a path. He endeavoured to make some observation, but George stopped him.

"Father," said he, with a smile, "you remember the day when, after having performed prodigies of valour, after having rescued the volunteers, after having taken one of the enemy's colours, these colours were torn from your hands by M. de Malmedie. Upon that day in presence of the enemy, you were great, noble, sublime in your dauntless courage, as you ever are before danger; upon that day I swore that one day or other men and things should be restored to their proper positions; that day has arrived and I shall not recoil before

my oath. God shall judge between slaves and masters, between the weak and the strong, between martyrs and their executioners."

Then as Pierre Munier, feeble, powerless, and unable to urge a single objection to such a determined resolution, shrunk within himself as if the weight of the entire globe pressed him down, George ordered Ali to saddle the horses, and after having calmly finished his breakfast, fixing from time to time a sorrowful gaze on his father, he arose to go. Pierre Munier started, and rising from his seat stretched out his arms towards his son. George advanced towards him, took his father's hand, and with an expression of filial love he had never before permitted himself to show, he pressed his lips to the venerable old man's forehead and rapidly kissed, five or six times in succession, the grey locks which floated over it.

"My son! my son!" cried Pierre Munier.

"Father," said George, "you shall enjoy a respected old age or I shall fill an early grave. Adieu!"

George rushed out of the room, and the old man with a deep groan fell back into his chair.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REFUSAL.

AT about two leagues from his father's house, George overtook Miko-Miko, who was returning to Port Louia. He stopped his horse, made a sign to the Chinese to approach him, whispered a few words in his ear, to which Miko-Miko replied by a sign of intelligence, and continued his way. On reaching the foot of Mount Discovery, George began to meet a few of the inhabitants of the city. He carefully examined the countenances of these promenaders, but was unable to perceive on any of them a single symptom which could lead him to suspect that the revolt which he had fixed to take place that evening, had in the least transpired. He continued his

route, crossed the camp of the blacks, and entered the city. The city was perfectly quiet; every one appeared occupied with his personal affairs, and the inhabitants in general seemed free from any excitement or anxiety. The shipping lay quietly at anchor in the calm and sheltered harbour. Idlers' Point was thronged with its accustomed loungers, as an American vessel, arrived from Calcutta, had just anchored in front of the Chien-de-Plomb.

George's presence appeared nevertheless to create an undefinable sensation; but it was evident that this sensation might be attributed to the affair of the races and to the unheard-of insult offered by a mulatto to a white. On the young man's approach, several groups evidently ceased conversing on the subjects which had previously occupied them, to follow George with their eyes and to exchange in a low tone of voice a few words of astonishment upon the audacity which had urged him to re-appear in the city; but George replied to their looks by a glance so haughty, to their whisperings by a smile so disdainful, that these whisperings ceased, and all eyes were lowered, no longer able to support the look of lofty disdain which darted from those of George. Moreover the carved handle of a double-barrelled pistol protruded from each of his holsters. The soldiers and officers whom George encountered upon his road were more particularly the objects of his attention. But the features of both soldiers and officers wore that air of blank indifference habitual to men transported from one extremity of the earth to the other, and condemned to an exile four thousand leagues away from their native country. Most assuredly had they been aware that George was preparing some occupation for them that very evening, they would have worn an air, if not more joyous, at least more important than they displayed. All appearances therefore re-assured George.

He arrived thus at the door of the Government-house, threw the bridle of his horse to Ali, and desired him not to quit the place. He then crossed the court, ascended the steps, and entered the ante-chamber. An order

had been already given to the domestics to introduce M. George Munier as soon as he should present himself; a servant therefore preceded the young man, throw open the door, and announced him. George entered.

In the saloon were seated Lord William Murray, M. de Malmedie, and Sara. To the great astonishment of Sara, whose eyes were immediately directed towards the young man, George's features assumed rather a sorrowful than a joyous expression on seeing her; he knit his brows slightly, and an almost bitter smile parted his lips.

Sara, who on his entrance had risen quickly from her seat, felt her limbs tremble under her and sank slowly back into her chair. M. de Malmedie stood erect and motionless, and contented himself with making a slight inclination of the head. Lord William Murray advanced two or three steps towards George and held out his hand. "My young friend," said he, "I am happy to have it in my power to announce to you a piece of good news, which I trust will fulfil all your desires. M. de Malmedie, desirous of putting an end to all those distinctions of colour and rivalries of caste which have for the last two hundred years proved the bane of the Isle of France as well as the colonies in general, consents to grant you the hand of his niece, Mademoiselle Sara de Malmedie."

Sara blushed and raised, almost imperceptibly, her eyes to those of her lover, but George merely bowed without making any reply. M. de Malmedie and Lord William Murray gazed at him with astonishment.

"My dear M. de Malmedie," said Lord William Murray, with a smile, "I see plainly that our incredulous young friend cannot altogether rely upon my word alone. Tell him, therefore, that you grant him the demand he made of you, and that it is your desire that all feelings of animosity between your families, old as well as recent, be for ever buried."

"It is true, monsieur," said M. de Malmedie, visibly exerting a great effort over himself, "and M. le Gouverneur has rightly informed you of my sentiments. If

you still bear malice for an event which took place at the period of the surrender of Port Louis, forget it, as I promise you my son will also forget the much more serious insult you lately offered him. As to your union with my niece, the governor has also stated the facts correctly; I give my consent, unless to-day it is you who intend to refuse."

"Oh, George!" cried Sara, carried away for a moment by the strength of her feelings.

"Hasten not to judge me by my reply, Sara," replied the young man, "for, rest assured, my reply is dictated by imperious necessity. Sara, since the evening of the pavilion, since the night of the ball, since the day on which I first beheld you, you are, before God and man, my wife. No other shall bear a name which, despite its abasement, you have not disdained. All that I am now going to say, is a question of form and time." George then turned towards the governor: "Thanks, my Lord," said he, "many thanks. I recognise in what has passed to-day the influence of your generous philanthropy and your kind friendship; but from the day on which M. de Malmedie refused me the hand of his niece, from the day when, for the second time, M. Henri insulted me—an insult for which I believed it my duty to inflict upon him a public, inefaceable, and degrading chastisement—from that day I have broken off all connexion with the whites. Henceforward there can be no further dealings between us. M. de Malmedie may indeed, for reasons of his own of which I am ignorant, advance half-way, but I shall never advance the other half. If Mademoiselle Sara loves me, she is free mistress of her hand and of her fortune. It is for her to raise herself still higher in my estimation by descending to me, and not for me to abase myself in hers by endeavouring to raise myself to her position."

"Oh, M. George!" cried Sara, "you well know——"

"Yes, I do know," said George, "that you are a noble girl, that you have a warm and devoted heart, a pure and spotless soul; I know that you will be mine despite all obstacles, all commands, all prejudices. I know that I

have but to wait patiently, and that one day I shall see you appear, and I feel the more convinced of this because I am aware that the sacrifice being on your side, you have already decided in your generous heart upon making it; but as to you, M. de Malmedie, as to your son, M. Henri, who consents to forego fighting with me upon the condition that he shall have me flogged by his friends, our quarrel is deep and lasting and cannot be effaced but by the most ample redress."

"Lord William Murray," replied M. de Malmedie, with more dignity than he could have been supposed capable of assuming, "you see that on my part I have done all; I have sacrificed my pride, I have forgotten alike the old and the recent insult, but I cannot in reason do more, and I must abide by the declaration of war which this gentleman has made me, and shall prepare myself for the attack by keeping on the defensive. Now, mademoiselle," continued M. de Malmedie, turning towards Sara, "as M. Munier says, you are free—free in your heart, free in your hand, free in your fortune; act therefore according to your own will; remain with this gentleman or follow me."

"Uncle," said Sara, "it is my duty to follow you. Adieu, George. I cannot comprehend the motives which have induced you to act as you have done this day, but without doubt you have acted as you thought right. And bowing to the governor with a calm and dignified air, Sara left the room with M. de Malmedie."

Lord William Murray accompanied his visitors to the door, left the room with them, and returned an instant afterwards. His inquiring glance met the firm and steady gaze of George, and there was a moment's silence between these two men, who, thanks to their elevated natures, understood each other so perfectly.

"So," said the governor, first breaking silence, "you have refused."

"I believed it my duty to act thus, my Lord."

"Pardon me if I have the air of questioning you; but may I ask what sentiment has dictated your refusal?"

"The feeling of my own dignity."

"And that is the only one?" demanded the governor.

"If there should be another, my lord, permit me to keep it secret."

"Listen to me, George," said the governor, with that air of frankness which had so much the more charm when assumed by one to whose cold and composed nature it was so completely foreign, "listen to me. From the moment that I first met you on board the Leicester, from the moment that I was first enabled to appreciate the high and noble qualities which distinguish your character, my earnest wish was to make you the link which should re-unite in this island the two castes so long opposed to each other. I began by endeavouring to read your thoughts and wishes; then you made me the confidant of your love affair, and I at once agreed to the request you made me, that I would in this matter act as your negotiator, your sponsor, your friend. For this, George," resumed Lord William, replying to the inclination of the head which George made, "for this, my young friend, you owe me no thanks; you yourself met my wishes half-way, you seconded my plans of conciliation, you smoothed away the difficulties of my political projects. I accompanied you therefore to the house of M. de Malmédie, and I supported your demand with all the influence which my name and position naturally gave me."

"I know it, my lord, and I thank you. But you saw yourself that neither the weight of your name, honourable though it be, nor the authority of your presence, flattering as it must have been considered, could spare me the pain of a refusal."

"And I suffered as much in consequence as you did yourself. I admired your calm and gentlemanly demeanour, and felt assured by your *sang-froid* that you were preparing a terrible revenge. This revenge, on the day of the races, you took in the presence of all, and from that day I felt certain that in all probability I should be obliged to renounce those projects of conciliation which until then I had so fondly cherished."

"I forewarned you of that, my lord, as I left you."

"Yes, I know you did, but listen to me. Notwithstanding what had happened I did not consider myself as defeated; I yesterday presented myself at the house of M. de Malmedie, and by dint of prayers and entreaties, by almost abusing the influence which my position gave me, I obtained from the father his promise that he would forget his ancient feud with your father, from the son that he would also forget his recent animosity against you; and finally, from both that they would consent to your marriage with Mademoiselle Sara de Malmedie."

"Sara is free, my lord," hastily interrupted George, "and in order to become my wife she does not, thank God, stand in need of any one's consent."

"Yes, I am aware," continued the governor; "but how striking a difference in the eyes of the public is there, between clandestinely carrying off a young girl from the house of her guardian, and receiving her openly from the hands of her family. Consult your pride, M. Munier, and tell me if I had not prepared for you a lofty satisfaction—a triumph which even you yourself did not expect."

"It is true," replied George. "Unfortunately this consent arrives too late."

"Too late! and why too late?" returned the governor.

"Pray excuse my replying to you on this point, my lord. That is my secret."

"Your secret, unhappy young man! Well now, shall I tell you this secret which you are so unwilling to reveal to me?"

George looked at the governor with a smile of incredulity.

"Your secret!" continued the governor, "and a very safe and well-kept secret that must be, which is confided to ten thousand individuals."

George continued to gaze at the governor, but this time without a smile.

"Listen to me," resumed the governor; "you have

sought your own destruction, I have endeavoured to save you. I proceeded to Sara's uncle, I took him aside, and said to him: 'You have ill appreciated M. George Munier; you repulsed him insolently and compelled him openly to break off all connexion with us; and you did wrong, for M. George Munier is a distinguished man, possessed of an elevated character, and a noble mind. There was something to be made from such an organization, and the proof is, that at the present moment M. George Munier holds our lives in his hands; he is the chief of a vast conspiracy and to-morrow at ten o'clock at night (it was yesterday I spoke thus), M. George Munier will march upon Port Louis at the head of ten thousand negroes. Our entire force is but eighteen hundred men, and unless chance shall send me for our preservation one of those fortunate ideas which occasionally occur to men of genius, we are all lost. The day following, this self-same M. George Munier whom you now despise as the descendant of a race of slaves, may perhaps be our master, and perhaps will not condescend to have you for slaves in his turn. Well you can prevent all this, monsieur,' I said to him, 'you can save the colony. Overlook the past, grant M. Munier the hand of your niece which you have already refused him, and if he accept it, if he is willing to accept it—for the parts being changed the pretensions may be changed also—by so acting you will have preserved not only your own lives, liberties, and fortunes, but yet more, the liberties, lives, and fortunes of all!' Then upon my prayers, my entreaties, nay even my commands, he consented. But what I foresaw has come to pass; you were too deeply engaged beforehand, and have no longer power to draw back."

George had listened to the words of the governor with increasing astonishment, but yet with an air of perfect calmness.

"So," said he, when the latter had concluded, "you know all, my lord?"

"That must be very evident to you. I do not think I have forgotten anything."

"No," replied George, smiling, "no, your spies are well-informed, and I hasten to compliment you on the manner in which your police is organized."

"Well then," said the governor, "now that you are aware of the motives which induced me to act as I have done, there is still time left; accept the hand of Sara, become reconciled to her family, renounce your insensate projects, and I know nothing—I am ignorant of all—I have forgotten all!"

"Impossible," said George.

"But reflect for a moment on the sort of men with whom you are engaged!"

"You forget, my lord, that these men of whom you speak with so much disdain, are my brothers; that, despised by the whites as their inferiors, they have chosen me as their chief; you forget that at the moment when these men confided their lives into my hands, I also vowed to sacrifice my own for them."

"So you refuse?"

"I refuse."

"Despite my entreaties?"

"Excuse me, my lord, but I cannot listen to them."

"Notwithstanding your love for Sara and the love which she bears for you?"

"In despite of everything."

"Yet reflect for a few moments."

"It is useless, my reflections are already made."

"Tis well. Now, monsieur," said Lord William Murray, "one last question."

"Proceed."

"If I were in your position and you were in mine, what should you do?"

"How do you mean?"

"Suppose that I were George Munier, the chief of the insurrection, and you Lord William Murray, governor of the Mauritius—if you held me within your grasp

as securely as I now hold you within mine, tell me, I ask you for the second time, what would you do?"

"What I should do, my lord, is this—I should permit to go in peace the man who had come hither on my word, under the impression that he was summoned to a rendezvous and not drawn into a snare; then, in the evening, if I had faith in the justice of my cause, I would appeal to God to decide between us."

"Well, you would act wrong, George, for from the moment that I should have drawn the sword, you would no longer have it your power to save me; from the moment I should have lighted up the torch of rebellion it would have become necessary for you to extinguish it in my blood. No, George, I am unwilling that such a man as you should perish on a scaffold—do you understand me—should die like a common rebel whose intentions would be calumniated and whose name tarnished. To save you from such a fate, to rescue you from your destiny, you are my prisoner—monsieur, I arrest you."

"My lord!" exclaimed George, looking round to see if there was any weapon which he could seize in order to defend himself.

"Guard!" said the governor, raising his voice, "enter and take this gentleman prisoner."

Four soldiers entered the room and surrounded George.

"Take this gentleman to the guard-house," said the governor; "lodge him in the chamber I directed to be prepared this morning, and while keeping a strict watch over his person, see that neither you nor any one that approaches him, in any way fail in the respect due to his rank." So saying, the governor bowed to George and left the apartment.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REVOLT.

THE incidents which we have just narrated had passed so rapidly and in a manner so unexpected, that George had not even time to prepare himself for what had taken place. But thanks to that wonderful power he possessed over himself, he hid under an impassable exterior and a smile of careless disdain the various emotions by which he was assailed. The prisoner and his guards left the Government-house by a back entrance, at the threshold of which one of the governor's carriages awaited them, but at the very moment when George stepped into the carriage, whether through chance or premeditation, Miko-Miko passed the door. The young man and his faithful messenger exchanged a glance.

As the governor had directed, George was taken to the guard-house. It is a large building, the name of which indicates its destination, and is situated in the Rue du Gouvernement, a little below the Rue de la Comedie. George was there incarcerated in the chamber pointed out by the governor. It had evidently, as Lord William Murray had said, been prepared beforehand for his reception, and it was also evident that some pains had been taken to render it as comfortable as possible. The furniture was neat, and the bed almost elegant; nothing, in short, suggested the idea of a prison save the windows which were protected without by iron bars.

As soon as the door had been closed on George, and he found himself alone, he proceeded straight to this window and found that it was at an elevation of about twenty feet from the ground and faced the Hotel Coignet. As one of the windows of the Hotel Coignet was exactly opposite that of George's room, the prisoner could see into the apartment situated in front of him, and with so much the more ease as this window was open. George returned from the window to the door, listened attentively, and heard them posting a sentry in the corridor. Then he returned to the window and opened it. No

guard had been stationed in the street: they had evidently relied on the bars for the prisoner's security; and in fact these bars were of a strength and thickness sufficient to have re-assured the most uneasy watchfulness.

From this moment George appeared almost as tranquil as if he had been in his own apartment at Moka; from time to time however, an attentive observer might have remarked that he knit his brow and occasionally passed his hand across his forehead. Beneath this appearance of serenity a whole throng of ideas rushed through his mind, and, like a swelling tide, beat against his brain with the flux and reflux of their waves. Meanwhile the hours passed away without the least indication to the prisoner that any preparations were being made in the city. Not the sound of a drum nor the slightest clash of arms could be heard. Two or three times George ran to his window, deceived by a sound which resembled the roll of a drum, but each time he found that he had been mistaken, and that the sound which had deceived him proceeded from a passing cart laden with hogsheads.

Night came on, and as its shadows began to fall, George, more agitated and uneasy than ever, began to pace his room, with hasty and feverish steps, from the door to the window, and from the window back again to the door. The door was still guarded by the sentry, the window had for its sentinel only its trusty bars. From time to time George would place his hand upon his heart, and on these occasions a slight contraction of his features would indicate that he experienced one of those palpitations which the bravest man cannot altogether repress, in circumstances which may be decisive of their whole future fate. Then, he thought of his father, who was ignorant of the peril which he ran, and of Sara who had been its innocent and unwilling cause.

As for the governor, although George still nourished towards him that cold and concentrated feeling of revenge which a gambler who has lost, ever feels for

his successful adversary, he could not conceal from himself that he had on this occasion displayed towards him all that high breeding and respect habitual to him, and still further, that he had refrained from taking the final step, until he had offered him every means of escape which lay in his power. All this, however, did not prevent George from being arrested on a charge of high treason.

During this time, the shadows of night began every moment to grow deeper and deeper; George drew out his watch, it was half-past eight—in another hour and a-half the revolt would break out. All at once he raised his head and fixed his eyes anew upon the Hotel Coignet. In the chamber situated in front of his own, he had seen a shadow move; this shadow made a sign to him. George stepped aside from the window, and a packet which was thrown across the street and had passed between the bars, fell into the middle of the apartment. George darted forward and seized the packet—it contained a cord and a file; this was the assistance from without which he had expected. He now held his freedom within his own hands; he longed only to be free for the hour of danger. He hid the rope under the mattress of his bed, and as the night had now completely closed in, he began to file at one of the window-bars. The bars were at a sufficient distance from each other to enable the prisoner, on one bar being removed, to pass through the opening thus effected. It was a dumb file, consequently no sound was heard, and as his supper had been brought about seven o'clock, George felt almost certain of being undisturbed. The work nevertheless advanced but slowly: nine o'clock, half-past nine, ten o'clock struck. As the prisoner sawed at the iron bar, he fancied, during several minutes, that he saw a bright light in the direction of the Rue de la Comedie and of the Port. Not a single patrol however could be seen in the streets, not a straggling soldier could be perceived regaining his barracks.

George could not understand this apparent apathy

displayed by the governor, but he knew him too well not to feel assured that he had taken all necessary precautions, and yet, as we have said, the city appeared perfectly defenceless, and as if completely abandoned to itself. At ten o'clock, however, he fancied he could hear a distant murmur proceeding from the direction of the Malabar Camp. This was the side from whence the conspirators (who it may be remembered were to assemble on the banks of the Lataniers River) were to arrive. George redoubled his efforts, the bar was already completely filed through below, and he now began to file it above.

The distant murmur began to increase audibly; he could no longer be deceived; it was that vast hum caused by the mingled voices of several thousand men. Laiza then had kept his word; a smile of joy passed over George's lips, a flush of pride mounted to his brow—they were about to engage. Victory perhaps might not be declared on their side, but at least they would have a struggle for it. And George was now about to share in this fight, for the bar no longer held but by a thread. With strained ears and palpitating heart he continued to listen; the noise approached nearer and nearer, and this light which he had already remarked, seemed still further to increase in brilliancy. Could Port Louis be on fire? It was impossible, for not a single cry of distress was to be heard. And moreover, although he still heard this noise, which, strange to say, seemed rather a joyous than a menacing sound, not a single report of musketry was heard, and the street in which the guard-house was situated, remained perfectly deserted. George waited a quarter of an hour longer, in hopes that some musket-shot would be heard, and terminate his uncertainty by announcing to him that the hostile parties were engaged; but the same strange rumour still reached his ears, without any of those sounds so anxiously expected mingling with the general hum of voices. The prisoner then thought that the best thing for him to do would be to fly. With one vigorous effort the bar gave way;

George tied the rope firmly to the remaining bar, threw the bar before him into the street in order that it might serve him as a weapon, passed through the opening, let himself glide down the rope, touched the earth in safety, picked up the bar and darted down a bye-street in the direction of the noise.

In proportion as George advanced towards the Rue de Paris, which traverses the entire northern quarter of the city, he saw the light increase in brilliancy, and heard the strange sound redouble. At length he reached the corner of a brilliantly lighted street, and all was explained. Every street which led in the direction of the Malabar Camp, that is to say towards the point at which the rebels must enter the city, was brilliantly illuminated as if for a festival, and at regular distances in front of the principal houses, hogsheads of arrack, brandy, and rum, had been arranged, all ready opened as if for a gratuitous distribution.

The negroes had rushed like a torrent upon Port Louis, uttering shouts of rage and vengeance; but on their arrival they had found the streets illuminated and beheld the tempting hogsheads. For an instant, the commands of Laiza, and the idea that all this liquor was poisoned, had restrained them, but soon nature overcame discipline and even fear. In the first instance a few men had broken their ranks and had begun to drink. Hearing their shouts of joy, the other negroes were no longer able to keep their ranks; the whole of this vast multitude which would have sufficed to overwhelm Port Louis, in one instant spread themselves abroad and became scattered about, grouping themselves round the barrels with shouts of joyous exultation, eagerly drinking, even with their hands, this brandy, arrack, and rum, the bane of the negro race, the very sight of which a negro knows not how to resist, in exchange for which he would sell his children, his father, his mother, and ends very frequently by selling himself.

From thence proceeded those shouts, the strange expression of which George had been unable to compre-

hend. The governor had put in practice the advice given by Jacques, and as we have seen had found it good. The insurrection which had entered the city was already abated before crossing the quarter which stretches from the Little Mountain to the Trou-Fanfaron, and had altogether died away within a hundred paces of the Government-house. At the sight of the strange spectacle which met his view, George no longer entertained a hope of the successful issue of his enterprise. He recalled to mind the prediction of his brother Jacques, whilst a shudder of rage and shame ran through his frame.

These men, with whom he had expected to change the whole face of affairs, to shake the isle to its very centre, and to avenge two centuries of slavery by an hour of victory and a future of liberty—these men were before him, laughing, dancing, singing, disarmed, intoxicated, reeling to and fro—these men, three hundred soldiers armed with whips could now drive back to their labour, and yet these men were ten thousand in number. Thus, all George's long and painful efforts over himself were lost; all his deep study of his own heart, his own strength, and his own value, had been in vain; all his superiority of mind bestowed by God, of education acquired from men,—all had broken down and given way before the instincts of a race who loved brandy better than liberty. George now felt the nothingness of his ambition. His pride had for an instant transported him to a mountain top, and had shown him, stretched at his feet, all the kingdoms of the earth; then all had disappeared—it was but a vision; and George found himself on precisely the same spot from whence his deceitful pride had taken him.

He clutched the bar of iron in his hand; he felt a ferocious desire to throw himself headlong among these wretches, and crush those brutish skulls which had not had strength sufficient to resist the gross temptation of which they had become the victims. A few groups of curious townspeople, unable to comprehend the meaning of this *impromptu festival* given by the governor to the slaves,

gazed at the scene with mouths and eyes opened wide with astonishment. Each questioned his neighbour regarding the cause of the uproar, without his neighbour, as ignorant as himself, being able to reply, or give him the slightest information.

George ran from group to group, darting his glances to the bottom of those long rows of streets all brilliantly lighted up and filled with intoxicated negroes uttering insensate screams and cries. He sought amongst this crowd of filthy beings for one man, one single man, on whom he could still depend amid the general degradation. This man was Laiza. All at once George heard a loud murmur proceeding from the direction of the guard-house. Then a few sharp volleys of musketry were heard, fired on one side with that precision and regularity habitual to troops of the line, on the other with the desultory skirmishing fire of irregular troops. At last then there was one spot at which an engagement had taken place. George darted forward in this direction, and in five minutes he was in the Rue du Gouvernement. He was not deceived. The little troop now engaged, were led on by Laiza, who having learned that George was a prisoner, had at the head of four hundred picked men made the circuit of the city, and had marched upon the guard-house to rescue him. Doubtless this movement had been foreseen, for as soon as the little band of rebels made its appearance at the end of the street, a body of British troops moved forward to oppose them. Laiza had not indeed supposed that they would permit him to carry off George without a struggle, but he had reckoned upon the diversion which should be made by the main body arriving by the streets adjacent to the Malabar camp. This diversion however, as we have seen, had failed from the causes which we have just narrated.

George sprang with one bound into the midst of the combatants, calling with a loud voice, "Laiza, Laiza!" He had at last found a negro worthy of being a man, he had at length met with a nature equal to his own. The two chiefs met in the middle of the throng; and

there, without seeking a shelter from the fire of the troops, indifferent to the balls which whistled around them, they exchanged a few of those short and hurried words which imminent situations alone call forth. In an instant Laiza was informed of all. He shook his head and only replied, "All is lost!"

George endeavoured to give him hopes, and proposed that some effort should be made upon the drunkards, but Laiza replied with a smile of supreme disdain. "They drink," said he, "and unless the brandy fails them, there is no hope."

But the barrels had been tapped in sufficient quantities to render such hopes utterly futile. Now that George, to deliver whom Laiza had come, was free, all fighting became useless on the spot where they were engaged; they had but to regret the loss of a dozen of their men already put *hors de combat*, and to give the signal for the instant retreat of the remainder.

But all retreat by the Rue du Gouvernement had now become impossible; for whilst Laiza's little troop showed front to the British troops which had first opposed it, another detachment, hitherto in ambush in the magazine, issued forth from their retreat and completely closed the way by which Laiza and his men had advanced. It therefore became necessary to throw themselves into the streets which surround the Palais de Justice, and by these avenues regain the neighbourhood of the Little Mountain and the Malabar camp.

Scarcely had George, Laiza, and their men advanced two hundred paces, when they found themselves in the streets which had been illuminated and strewed with the liquor hogsheads. The scene had now become still more disgusting than at first; the intoxication had made rapid progress. Then at the end of each street might be seen, sparkling through the gloom, the bayonets of an English company.

George and Laiza glanced at each other with a smile which signified, "this is no longer a question of conquering, but of dying and dying bravely too."

Both however were anxious to make one last effort.

They darted into the principal street, endeavouring to unite the insurgents to their own little troop. But some were scarcely in a fit state to hear or understand the cries and exhortations of their leaders; others entirely misunderstood them, but struck up the chorus of some drinking song with a roaring voice, endeavouring to dance as well as their trembling limbs would permit; whilst the greater number having now reached the last stage of intoxication, reeled to and fro through the streets, losing every instant the little sense which was still left them. Laiza seized a whip and by vigorous lashes endeavoured to arouse the wretches to a sense of their situation; while George, leaning upon the iron bar, the sole arm which he had touched, looked on, motionless and contemptuous as a statue of disdain.

After a few moments both were convinced that there was no longer a hope left, and that each minute wasted, might be so many years taken from their lives; besides some men of their troop, led away by the bad example of the rest, fascinated by the sight of the intoxicating beverage, bewildered by the alcoholic odour that mounted to their brain, began in their turn to give way to the temptation. There was no time therefore to be lost if they wished to quit the city, and indeed it was very evident that too much time had been already wasted.

George and Laiza re-assembled the little troop which still remained faithful to them, and who still numbered nearly three hundred men, and placing themselves at their head, they marched resolutely towards the end of the street, which, as we have mentioned, was closed by a wall of soldiery. Having arrived within forty paces of the British, they beheld their muskets levelled upon them; a sudden flash ran along the entire line, then a shower of bullets tore through their ranks, and ten or twelve men fell on the instant; but the two leaders remained standing and unhurt, and the cry of "Forward!" uttered at the same time by two powerful voices, resounded through the ranks. When they were within twenty paces, the fire of the second rank followed that of the first, com-

mitting among the insurgents still greater ravages. But almost at the same instant the two troops joined, and then a fight hand-to-hand commenced. It was a frightful mêlée; every one knows what sort of troops the British are, and how, sooner than give way, they will die where they have been placed. But on the other hand they had now to deal with desperate men, who knew that as prisoners an ignominious death awaited them, and who, almost indifferent to life, were determined to die free.

George and Laiza performed miracles of valour and courage—Laiza with his musket, which he had taken by the barrel and which he now used like a flail; George with the iron bar he had torn from his prison window and which served him as a mace. Their men also ably seconded them, rushing upon the British, bayonet in hand, whilst their wounded companions dragged themselves between the combatants making use of their knives to ham-string their enemies. This obstinate and deadly fight lasted thus ten minutes without any marked advantage declaring itself on either side; despair however at last succeeded in overcoming discipline, and the British ranks opened like the sides of a bursting dyke, permitting a passage for the torrent of men who forthwith spread themselves without the city.

George and Laiza who had been at the head of the attack now kept in the rear to cover the retreat. At length they arrived at the foot of the Little Mountain. This was too steep and also too densely wooded a spot for the English soldiers to hazard any further advance, consequently a halt was called; the conspirators also on their side paused to take breath. About twenty negroes rallied round their two chiefs, whilst the remainder scattered themselves abroad on all sides; there was no longer any question of fighting, but only of placing themselves in security in the great woods. George appointed the quarter of Moka, in which the habitation of his father was situated, as the general rendezvous of all those who might wish to rally round him, announcing that he would depart the following

morning at day-break to gain the quarter of Grand-Port, where the densest forests as we have said were situated.

George was engaged in giving these last instructions to the miserable remains of that troop with which he had for an instant dreamed of conquering the island, and the moon, gliding through the opening between two clouds, shed for a moment its light upon the group among which George was conspicuous, when all at once a flash of fire proceeded from a thicket situated about forty paces from the fugitives, the report of a musket was heard, and George fell at the feet of Laiza, wounded in the side by a musket ball. At the same moment a man whose rapid flight might be followed for an instant in the shade, darted from the still smoking thicket into a ravine which stretched behind him, followed its course during its entire length, then, re-appearing at its extremity, regained by a circuitous route the British ranks which had halted on the banks of the rivulet of the Pucelle.

But rapid as was the course of the assassin, Laiza had been enabled to recognise him, and before the wounded man entirely lost consciousness of what was passing around him, he could hear him murmur these words, accompanied by a threatening gesture, calm but implacable, "Antonio the Malay!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FATHER'S HEART.

WHILST the different events which we have just narrated were taking place at Port Louis, Pierre Munier awaited at Moka, in anxious expectation, the result of that terrible enterprise which his son had hinted to him. Habituated, as we have seen, to the constant supremacy of the whites, he had ended by considering this supremacy not only as an acquired right, but also as a natural superiority. How great soever therefore might

be the degree of confidence with which his son inspired him, whatever might be his courage and will, he could not imagine that these obstacles, which he regarded as insurmountable, could possibly be overcome by him. From the moment that George had bidden him farewell, he fell into a state of the deepest apathy; the very excess of the emotions which weighed upon his mind and the diversity of the ideas which thronged together in his brain, had thrown him into a state of apparent insensibility almost resembling idiocy. Two or three times indeed he had entertained the idea of going himself to Port Louis and seeing with his own eyes what was passing there, but to encounter a dreaded certainty required a strength of mind which the poor father did not possess; if it had been simply a question of meeting a danger, Pierre Munier would not have hesitated.

The day therefore passed in agonies, so much the deeper that they were mental, and that he who experienced them dared not inform any one, not even Telemachus, though frequently questioned by him on the subject, of the cause of the dejection under which he laboured. From time to time he would rise from his chair, proceed with downcast eyes to the open window, cast a long and wistful glance towards the city as if he could see, listen attentively for a few moments as if he could hear, then seeing nothing, hearing nothing, he would heave a deep sigh, and return with mute lips and fixed and vacant eyes, to seat himself again in his chair.

The dinner hour arrived. Telemachus, charged with the ordinary cares of the household, laid the table and served the repast; but all these different operations were concluded without him for whom they were performed, ever once raising his eyes; then, when all was ready, Telemachus let a quarter of an hour elapse, but seeing that his master still remained in the same state of apathy, he touched him lightly on the shoulder. Pierre Munier started, and rising quickly to his feet, exclaimed:

“Well, is any thing known yet?”

Telemachus, in reply, pointed to the dinner which was

on the table, but Pierre Munier smiled sadly, shook his head, and relapsed again into his reverie. The negro saw that something extraordinary was going on, and without daring to ask an explanation of the mystery, he rolled his two large glistening eyes around him, as if seeking some sign which might give him a clue to the unknown event; but everything was in its accustomed place, and all was calm as usual, only it was evident that the expectation of some great misfortune had come that morning to seat itself at the domestic hearth.

The day passed over in this manner. Telemachus, still in hopes that hunger would resume its rights, left the dinner on the table; but Pierre Munier was too deeply absorbed to occupy himself with anything save his own thoughts. Once however Telemachus, seeing large drops of perspiration standing on his master's forehead, fancied that he was warm, and presented him with a glass of wine and water; but Pierre Munier put the proffered glass gently aside, saying as he did so:

"Then you have learned nothing yet?"

Telemachus shook his head, and gazed by turns at the floor and ceiling, as if asking each alternately if they knew any more than himself; then seeing that both remained dumb, he left the room to see if the other negroes were any better informed than himself upon the unknown subject of his master's secret uneasiness. But to his great astonishment, he perceived that there was not a single negro round the house. He ran forthwith to the barn, where they were in the habit of assembling to hold the berloque. The barn was deserted; he returned by the huts, but there he found only the women and children. He questioned these latter, and learned that as soon as the day's work had been finished, the negroes, in place of resting themselves at home, had each taken arms and had departed in separate groups, but all taking the direction of the Lataniers River.

Then he returned to the dwelling-house. At the noise made by Telemachus in opening the door, the old man turned round. "Well?" demanded he.

Telemachus informed him of the absence of the

negroes, and how they all had proceeded in arms towards the same point.

"Yes, yes," groaned Pierre Munier, "Alas! yes."

There was no longer then any doubt remaining, and this last information still further concurred to make the poor father believe that the moment was come which should decide his fate; for since George's return, the old man, on beholding once more his son so handsome and so brave, so confident in himself, so rich in the past, so sure of the future, had so completely identified his life with that of his adored child, that he had almost reached the point of believing that they lived in one and the same existence; and felt inwardly convinced that he could never support the loss of his son or even his temporary absence. Oh! how he reproached himself then for having let George depart that morning without having questioned him, without having penetrated the inmost recesses of his heart, without having informed himself of the amount of danger to which he was about to be exposed! How he reproached himself for not having insisted upon following him; but the bare idea that his son was about to encounter the whites in open combat, had so completely stunned him, that he had for the moment felt all his moral strength abandon him. It was the nature of this simple heart to possess courage only before physical danger.

Meanwhile the night had come on, and the hours elapsed without bringing any news, either consolatory or the reverse. Ten, eleven, twelve o'clock, struck. Although the darkness which reigned without, rendered yet more profound by the light in the apartment, prevented any object being distinguished at ten paces distance, yet Pierre Munier continued to pace at almost regular intervals, although these intervals became every moment shorter, from his chair to the window, and from the window to his chair. Telemachus, now really uneasy, had installed himself in the same apartment; but devoted as the faithful servant was to his master, he had not been able to resist the power of sleep, and

sat dozing on a chair, leaning against the wall, upon which his profile was traced like a design in charcoal.

At two o'clock in the morning, a house-dog which in general was permitted to wander at night round the dwelling, but which in the general pre-occupation had been left chained up, uttered a low and plaintive howl. Pierre Munier trembled and rose from his seat; but at the melancholy sound, which in their superstition the blacks regard as the certain announcement of approaching misfortune, his strength failed him, and to prevent himself from falling he was obliged to cling to the table. After an interval of five minutes the dog gave utterance to a second howl, louder, sadder, and more prolonged than the first; then at equal distance from the second, a third, more funereal and more lamentable even than the two first. Pierre Munier, pale, speechless, the perspiration standing in large drops upon his forehead, stood motionless, his eyes fixed upon the door, without making a step towards it; like a man who awaits misfortune and who is aware that is by that entrance it must reach him. In the course of a few moments, the footsteps of a considerable number of persons were heard approaching the house; the steps drew near, but they were slow and measured. It seemed to the poor father, that these footsteps were those of men who followed a bier. Shortly afterwards it seemed as if the outer chamber was filled with people, but this crowd, whatsoever it might be, was mute. Amid this strange silence, however, the old man fancied that he could hear a moan, and even thought that in this moan he could distinguish the voice of his son.

"George!" cried he, "George!—in the name of Heaven is that you? Answer me—speak—come!"

"It is I, father," replied a calm but feeble voice; "It is I."

At the same instant the door opened, and George appeared; but supporting himself against the door-post, and so pale that Pierre Munier fancied for a moment that it was the spirit of his son whom he had

invoked, and who now appeared before him, so that in place of advancing towards George, the old man recoiled a few steps in dismay.

"In the name of Heaven," murmured he, "what is the matter, and what has happened to you?"

"A serious wound; but do not be uneasy, father, one which is not mortal, since you see I am able to walk, although I cannot stand erect very long." Then he added, in a lower tone, "Assist me, Laiza, my strength fails me;" and he fell back into the arms of the negro.

Pierre Munier darted towards his son, but he had already fainted. With that strength of mind which had become the distinctive feature of George's character, he had wished, weak and almost dying as he was, to show himself to his father standing in an upright position; and on this occasion it was not from one of those feelings of pride which might be traced so often in his actions, but because, knowing the deep love which the old man bore him, he trembled lest, seeing him in a reclining position, the blow which his father would receive at this sight might prove fatal. Despite the entreaties of Laiza therefore, he had abandoned the litter upon which the negroes had borne him through the defiles of the Thumb Mountain, and with superhuman courage raised himself up, clung for support to the wall, and presented himself to his father on his feet. And in fact, as he had foreseen, the blow had thus been rendered less violent to the old man. But this iron will had at length given way to physical pain, and exhausted by the effort he had made, George, as we have seen, fainted in Laiza's arms.

It was terrible even for men to behold this poor father's grief—a grief without complaint, without a sob—mute—deep—despairing. They placed George upon a sofa. The old man knelt before him, passed one arm under the head of his child, and remained with eyes fixed, with respiration suspended, holding the powerless hand of the wounded man in his, asking nothing, seeking no details, making no inquiries as to the result. *It was enough for him that his son was there.*

wounded—bleeding—lifeless : what need had he to learn the cause, when the result was before him ?

Laiza stood in the corner of the room, leaning on his musket, and turning his glances from time to time towards the window, in expectation of the coming day. The other negroes, after having laid George on the sofa, had respectfully retired, and were collected together in the adjoining apartment, through the door of which they thrust their black heads ; others were grouped together outside the window ; many were wounded more or less dangerously, but none seemed to recollect their wounds. Every moment their number increased, for the fugitives, after having first scattered themselves in every direction to avoid the pursuit of the soldiery, had all, by different paths, regained the dwelling-house, as one after another a flock of scattered sheep regain the fold. At four o'clock in the morning, there were nearly two hundred negroes collected round the house.

Meanwhile George was restored to consciousness, and had by a few words endeavoured to re-assure his father ; but in a voice so weak that, notwithstanding the happiness the old man experienced in hearing him speak, he made a sign to him to keep silence. He then inquired as to the nature of the wound which his son had received, and who the physician was who had dressed it. With a smile and a feeble motion of the head, George pointed to Laiza.

It is well known that in the colonies there are many negroes who possess a reputation as skilful surgeons, and that sometimes even the white colonists will employ them in preference to a regular practitioner. The reason of this is plain ; these primitive men, continually as it were, in the presence of Nature, surprise, like animals, some of her secrets which are veiled to the eyes of other men. Now as Laiza passed throughout the entire island for a skilful surgeon, the negroes attributed his science to the power of certain secret words or magical incantations ; the whites to his knowledge of certain herbs and plants whose names and properties were known to himself alone. Pierre Ma-

nier was therefore easier in his mind when he found that it was Laiza who had dressed his son's wound.

Meanwhile the dawn was approaching, and as the time wore on, Laiza appeared more and more uneasy. At length he could no longer restrain his impatience; and under the pretext of feeling the pulse of the wounded man, he approached and spoke to him in a low voice.

"What are you saying to my son, my friend?" demanded Pierre Munier, "and what is it you wish?"

"What he wishes, my father, is, that I may not fall into the hands of the whites, and he asks me if I feel myself strong enough to be carried to the great woods."

"To be carried to the great woods!" cried the old man, "and in the weak state you are in? Impossible!"

"There is no other course to be pursued, my dear father, unless you prefer seeing me arrested before your eyes, and——"

"And what?" interrupted Pierre Munier, anxiously; "what would they—what can they do to you?"

"What they wish, father, is to revenge themselves upon a miserable mulatto who has had the presumption to oppose them, and who has succeeded in making them tremble for an instant. What can they do to me? Oh! almost nothing," added George, with a smile; "they can merely cut off my head in the *Plaines Vertes*."

The old man turned pale, and trembled visibly in every limb. It was evident that he was undergoing a terrible mental conflict. He raised his eyes, shook his head sorrowfully, and gazing on the form of his wounded child:

"Arrest you," he gently murmured; "cut off your head—take my child—kill him!—kill my George! and all because he is handsomer, braver, more learned than themselves! Ah! let them come, and then——"

And the old man, with a degree of energy of which, five minutes previously, no one would have believed him capable, darted towards his carabine, and seizing it with an arm that had lain idle for sixteen years:

"Yes, yes!" cried he, "let them come on, and we shall see! Ah! Messieurs the Whites, you have taken

all from the poor mulatto. You first took away his self-respect, and he said nothing; you might have taken his life, and he would not have murmured; but you sought to take his son—you sought to take his child—to imprison him—to torture him—to execute him! Oh! come, then, Messieurs the Whites, and we shall see! We have half a century of hatred to revenge. Come on—it is time that we should settle accounts!”

“Good! father—good!” cried George, supporting himself upon his elbow, and gazing at the old man with a feverish eye, “good!—now I know you again.”

“Yes, yes! to the great woods,” continued the old man, “and we shall see if they dare to follow us there! Yes, my son—yes—come!—better the great woods than the cities. There we are under the eye of God, and may the Almighty look down upon us and pity us! And you, my children,” continued the mulatto, addressing the negroes, “have you not always found me a good master?”

“Oh yes, yes!” cried all the negroes with one voice.

“Have you not repeated a hundred times, that you were devoted to me, not as slaves but as children.”

“Yes, yes!”

“Well, the hour has now come for you to prove your devotion.”

“Order, master, order us!” exclaimed all the blacks.

“Come in, come in, all of you;” the room was immediately filled with negroes. “Look here,” continued the old man,—“look at my son, who sought to save you, to liberate you, to make you men,—behold his reward! And yet this is not all; they seek to tear him from me—wounded—bleeding—almost lifeless as he is! Will you defend him?—will you save him?—will you die for him, and with him?”

“Oh yes, yes!” cried every voice.

“To the great woods then!” exclaimed the old man.

“To the great woods!” repeated all the negroes.

Without further delay they brought forward the litter, placed it beside the sofa on which George was lying, and stretched upon it the wounded man, whilst

four stout negroes seized the poles. The litter, accompanied by Laiza, then took the head of the procession, all the negroes followed, and last of all Pierre Munier brought up the rear, leaving the dwelling-house open, abandoned, and uninhabited by a single creature.

The little band, which was composed of about two hundred negroes, pursued its way for some time along the high road which leads from Port Louis to Grand-Port, then after about half an hour's march, it turned to the right, advancing towards the base of the Piton du Milieu in order to gain the source of the Creole River. Before passing behind the mountain, Pierre Munier, who had continued to form the rear-guard, climbed to the summit of a hillock, and cast one last glance upon that beautiful habitation which he had abandoned. In one view he embraced a wide expanse of rich and fertile plains, filled with sugar-canes, manioc, and maize, and dotted with clumps of pamplemousses, jameroses, and takamakassas, and in the distance the magnificent horizon of mountains which enclosed his immense property as with a gigantic wall. He reflected that it had required three generations of men as laborious and as estimable as himself, to make this quarter the paradise of the island, and he heaved a sigh, brushed aside a secret tear, and turning away his eyes and shaking his head, he regained, with a smile upon his lips, the litter on which was stretched the wounded child for whom he had abandoned all!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GREAT WOODS.

JUST as the fugitives reached the source of the Creole River, the day dawned, and the rays of an eastern sun gilded the rocky summit of the Piton du Milieu. With it awoke the entire population of the forests. At each step the tanrecks bounded from under the feet of the negroes and regained their burrows, the monkeys

sprang from branch to branch, and climbed the most flexile extremities of the cocoa, the filao, and the tamarind trees, from whence, balancing themselves and swinging by their tails, they would throw themselves a vast distance and alight with marvellous address on some other tree which afforded them a more leafy shelter. The cock of the woods rose noisily before the travellers, beating the air in his heavy flight, whilst the grey parroquets seemed to ridicule him with their mocking cry, and the cardinal bird, like a winged flame, would shoot past swift as lightning and sparkling like a ruby. Nature, ever young, joyous, and teeming with life, seemed by its serene tranquillity and placid happiness to reproach the agitations and the griefs of man.

After a march of three or four hours' duration, the little party halted on a piece of level ground at the foot of a mountain whose base is washed by the river. Hunger now began to make itself felt. Fortunately none had been idle during the march; some had with their sticks knocked over a few tanrecks, of which the negroes are in general very fond; others had killed monkeys and cocks of the wood; and lastly, Laiza had wounded a stag, in pursuit of which a party of four men had started, and which in the course of an hour they succeeded in capturing and bringing into the camp. There was accordingly an ample supply of provisions for the entire troop. Laiza took advantage of this halt to dress George's wound. From time to time he had left the side of the litter for the purpose of gathering some herb or plant whose properties were known to himself alone. On arriving at the place of repose, he arranged his harvest, placed the first collection in the hollow of a rock, and with a round stone bruised the simples he had gathered, almost as well as he could have done in a mortar. This operation completed, he pressed out the juice, steeped a linen rag in the liquid, and having removed the old dressings, placed the newly prepared ones upon the double wound; for happily the ball had not remained in the flesh, but having entered a little below the last left rib had passed out just above the hip.

Pierre Munier followed this operation with profound anxiety. The wound was serious but not mortal; and moreover it was plain by the appearance of the flesh, that supposing that no important organ had been injured inwardly, the cure would be more rapid than it would have been under the hands of a city physician. The poor father nevertheless passed through all those stages of agony which such a sight could not fail to cause him, whilst George on the contrary, notwithstanding the pain occasioned by the operation of dressing, did not once contract his brows, and repressed the slightest convulsive movement in the hand which his father held within his own. The dressing over and their repast finished, the party again set forward on their way. They now approached the great woods, but were still at some distance from them; the little troop, delayed by the transport of the wounded man, which the unevenness of the ground rendered very difficult, advanced but slowly, and since their departure from the dwelling-house, had left a trace easy to be followed.

They marched thus for nearly an hour, following the course of the Creole River; then they turned to the left and soon found themselves in the outskirts of the forests, for until then they had only been traversing a species of underwood. As they advanced, the *mimosas* shooting up in numerous tufts, the gigantic ferns pushing their graceful forms between the trees and rising almost to an equal height with them, and various creeping plants of prodigious thickness falling from the topmost boughs of the *takamakas*, like serpents swinging by their tails, began to announce that they were entering the region of the great woods. Very soon the forest became more and more dense, the trunks of the trees grew more closely to each other; the fern plants inlaced them in their folds, while the bamboos formed barriers through which it became more and more difficult, especially for the men who bore the litter, to force a passage. At every instant, George who saw the difficulties which the march presented, made an effort to alight; but each time Laiza dissuaded him

with an accent of such firmness, and his father clasped his hands together with such a supplicating gesture, that, not to wound the devotion of the one, nor hurt the tenderness of the other, the wounded man would resume his place, and leave his bearers to make fresh efforts, which became every moment more laborious, and which sometimes were for a length of time perfectly fruitless.

The difficulties experienced by the fugitives however in penetrating into the fastnesses of these virgin forests, were for them almost a guarantee of security, since these very difficulties would exist in a still greater degree for their pursuers; the fugitives being negroes, habituated from their childhood to similar exercises, while the pursuers were British soldiers, accustomed only to manœuvre in the Champ de Mars or in the Champ de Lort at Port Louis. Nevertheless, the party at last reached a spot so dense, so luxuriant, and so compact, that all attempts to proceed became perfectly useless. For a length of time the little troop skirted this species of forest wall, through which the hatchet alone could open a passage, but the passage once opened for one party would remain equally so for another, and while presenting an issue for flight, also offered means of pursuit.

While hunting about for an opening through which they might penetrate still further into the forest, they discovered an ajoupa,* and in it the still smouldering remains of a fire. It was evident that the maroons, or runaway slaves, were rambling about the neighbourhood, and to judge by the freshness of the traces left, they could not be even at any very great distance. Laiza forthwith set himself upon their trail.

We know the skill with which a savage will follow up through the wildest solitudes the track of a friend or enemy, and Laiza, with eyes bent searchingly to the earth, discovered each blade of grass which had been bent, each flint which had been displaced under the

* A species of rude hut constructed by sportsmen.

pressure of a footstep, each branch turned from its natural inclination by the pressure of a passing body; but at length he arrived at a spot where all trace failed him. On one side was a rivulet which fell in a succession of cascades down the mountain side, and emptied itself into the Creole river; on the other, a mass of rocks, loose shrubs, and brushwood, forming a sort of wall, over the summit of which the forest appeared even more dense than it was elsewhere. Behind lay the path which he had just traversed.

Laiza pursued his way along the course of the rivulet, seeking in vain on the other side for the continuation of the trail which had led him to its banks. The maroon negroes, for they must be in considerable numbers, had not therefore proceeded further. Laiza then endeavoured to scale the natural wall, and succeeded in doing so; but on reaching the summit he saw how impossible it would be for a party, among whom were several wounded men, to pursue such a path. He therefore climbed down again, and convinced that the men in search of whom he had started could not be far distant, he uttered, one after the other, the different cries by which the maroons are accustomed to recognise each other's presence. In the course of a few minutes, he fancied that in the thickest part of the brushwood which covered the stones forming the natural wall we have described, he could distinguish a slight rustling.

Any other than one habituated to the mysteries of solitude, would have certainly imagined this slight movement of a few branches the effect of a sudden eddy of wind; but in that case the motion would have taken place from their extremities to their base, whilst on the contrary the movement now seemed to spring from the base and disappear at the extremities. Laiza was not for a moment deceived, and his eyes were in consequence fixed intently on the thicket. Very soon whatever doubt he might have experienced, was changed into certainty; through the branches he was enabled to discern two restless eyes, which after having swept

around the limited horizon, were now fixed upon him. Laiza renewed the signal he had previously made use of, and at the same instant a man glided like a serpent from among the disjointed stones, and Laiza found himself confronted with a maroon negro. The two blacks exchanged only a few words, after which Laiza retraced his steps and proceeded to join the little troop, which under his guidance followed, in its turn, the road which he had previously taken, and soon arrived at the spot where he had discovered the negro.

A gap, produced by the displacing of a few stones, had opened a passage in the wall, which gave admittance to a vast grotto. The fugitives passed two by two through this easily defended pass. Behind the last, the negro piled up the stones in the same order in which they had previously been built, so that not a trace of their passage could be discovered; then clinging to the brushwood and the projecting corners of the stones, he scaled the wall and forthwith disappeared within the recesses of the forest.

Two hundred men had thus ingulfed themselves in the bowels of the earth, without the most skillful eye being able to divine at what spot they had effected ingress. Whether by one of those freaks of Nature occasionally met with, which do not require the hand of man to aid them in the effects produced, or whether on the contrary by long and provident labour of the maroons, the summit of the mountain, in the sides of which the little troop had disappeared, was defended on one side by a perpendicular rock forming a sort of rampart, and on another by that gigantic hedge, composed of trunks of trees, bamboos, and fern, which had in the first instance arrested the march of our fugitives. The only really practicable entrance, therefore, was that which we have described, and, as we have mentioned, this entrance was entirely concealed by the stones and brushwood which covered it. In consequence of the care with which this entrance was hidden from all eyes, both the colonists armed on their own account, and the British troops who gave chase on the part of the go-

verment to the runaway slaves, had passed a hundred times before the opening, without having the slightest suspicion of its existence.

But once on the other side of the natural rampart the aspect of the soil became completely changed. There were still to be seen vast woods, lofty forests, and dense thickets, but amid these one could at least trace out a path. Moreover, none of the absolute necessities of life were wanting in these vast solitudes. A cascade which had its source at the summit of the Piton, dashed itself majestically from a height of sixty feet, and after breaking in clouds of spray upon the rocks which it wore away in its eternal fall, flowed along for some time in peaceful rivulets, then, burying itself all at once in the bowels of the earth, it appeared again without the barrier. Stags, wild boars, deer, monkeys, and tanrecks abounded. Lastly, wherever through the immense dome of foliage a few straggling sunbeams found their way, there sprung up clumps of pamplemousses, laden with oranges, or vacoas charged with their cabbage-palm, the stalk of which is so delicate, that as soon as the fruit is ripe it falls to the ground at the slightest shock or at the least wind.

If the fugitives could succeed in concealing their retreat, they might therefore hope to exist without wanting any of the necessities of life until George was cured and some resolution could be come to. However, whatever plan the young man might decide on, the unfortunate slaves whom George had made his companions, were determined to follow him to the last. But although severely wounded, George retained his usual *sang-froid*, and he had not examined the retreat in which he sought shelter, without calculating all the advantages which it offered of defence from the attacks of an enemy. Once on the other side of the cavern therefore, he had ordered his litter-bearers to stop, and calling Laiza to his side he pointed out to him how, after having defended the exterior opening of this defile, they might, by opening an intrenchment, still further protect it within. The cavern might also be mined

with the powder which they had taken care to bring with them from Moka. The plan of this work was forthwith traced out and commenced, for George did not dissemble from himself that his enemies would not, in all probability, treat him as an ordinary fugitive, and he had sufficient pride to believe that the whites would not consider themselves conquerors, until they had him, bound hand and foot, in their power.

The little party forthwith set themselves to the work of defence, which was directed by George and actively conducted by Pierre Munier. During this time Laiza made the circuit of the mountain. Everywhere, as we have said, it was defended either by natural palisades or by steep and rugged rocks. In one spot only could these rocks be scaled, and there only with ladders of at least fifteen feet in length, while the road which led to the natural wall lay along the brink of a precipice. This road might be easily defended, but the troop was too small, and would require to be spread over too many places at once, to allow of any military operations being conducted beyond the limits of what might be called the fortress. Laiza saw at a glance that it was this weak point and the entrance of the cavern, which ought above all to be guarded with the utmost care and vigilance.

As the night now approached, Laiza left ten men at this important post, and returned to give an account to George of his tour round the mountain. He found the latter in a sort of hut hastily constructed with the branches of trees. The intrenchment was already almost completed, and notwithstanding the darkness which rapidly advanced, they continued to work at it actively. Twenty-five men were posted as sentinels round the encampment, who were to be relieved every two hours during the night. Pierre Munier remained at his post in the cavern, and Laiza, after having put fresh dressings on George's wound, returned to his own position. Then all awaited in anxiety the fresh events which without doubt the night would bring them.

CHAPTER XXV.

JUDGE AND EXECUTIONER.

IN fact, in a war of surprises like that which was about to take place between the insurgents and those who would not fail to pursue them, the night above all could not fail of being the auxiliary of the attacking party and the terror of the defending. That which was now about to close in was beautiful and serene, but the moon, having now entered its last quarter, would not rise before eleven o'clock. For men less occupied with the danger to which they were exposed, and above all less accustomed to a similar sight, the gradual fading away of the light amid the vast solitudes of the wild landscape we have endeavoured to depict, would have presented a magnificent spectacle. At first the shadows of the approaching night began to ascend from the low grounds, rising like a tide along the trunks of the trees, over the sides of the rocks, and along the slopes of the mountain; leading night and silence in their train, and chasing by degrees the last gleams of daylight which, flying at their approach, seemed to take refuge at last on the very summit of the Piton—lingered there for an instant, lighting up the rocky peak like the flames of a volcano, till at length they died away in their turn, completely submerged at last in the sea of shadow.

For eyes however accustomed to the night, this obscurity was not altogether complete, for ears habituated to solitude this silence was not absolute. Life is never utterly extinguished in Nature. To the sounds of the now sleeping day succeeded those murmurs which awake but at night. To the hum caused by the mingled sounds of the rustling of the foliage and the plaintive falling of the rivulet, were added other murmurs caused by the voices or the footsteps of the animals of night;—sombre voices, stealthy and unexpected footsteps, which inspire in the firmest hearts that mysterious emotion which

reason cannot overcome, for sight is not there to reassure.

But none of these confused murmurs escaped the well-tutored ear of Laiza. A hunter of the woods, and consequently a man of solitude and a traveller of the night, night and solitude had few mysteries for his eyes, few secrets for his ears. He could recognise the creaking sound produced by the tanreck while gnawing the roots of trees, the footsteps of the stag proceeding to the accustomed spring, or the beating of the bat's wings in the open spaces of the forest; and accordingly two hours passed away without any of these sounds succeeding in drawing him from his immobility. Moreover, strange to relate, it was in that part of the mountain which was then inhabited by nearly two hundred men, that the silence was most complete and the solitude seemed to be most perfect. Laiza's twelve negroes had lain down with their faces to the earth, so that he himself could scarcely distinguish them in the obscurity, which was rendered yet more dense by the shadows of the trees; and although some slept, it might have been supposed that during their slumbers prudence restrained their very breathing, it was so inaudible.

As for Laiza himself, leaning against an enormous tamarind tree whose flexible branches projected not only over the path which ran along the rocks, but also over the precipice which stretched beyond it, he could defy the best exercised eye to distinguish his form from the trunk of the giant tree with which, thanks to the night and the colour of his skin, he was so completely blended. He had stood for nearly an hour in this erect and motionless attitude, when he heard behind him the sound caused by the footsteps of several men upon ground covered with flints and dried branches. Moreover, these steps, although in some degree softened, seemed to have no wish to hide altogether their approach. He turned round carelessly therefore, feeling convinced that it must be a patrol which was advancing towards him; and in fact his eyes, habituated to the darkness, soon distinguished the forms of six or eight men, at whose

head he recognised, by his lofty stature and the dress he wore, the figure of Pierre Munier. Laiza seemed to detach himself from the tree against which he leant, and advanced towards him.

"Well," said he, "are the men you sent out to reconnoitre yet returned?"

"Yes, and the British are in pursuit of us."

"Where are they?"

"They were encamped an hour ago between the Piton du Milieu and the source of the Creole River."

"They are on our trail?"

"Yes, and to-morrow we shall probably have news of them."

"Sooner," replied Laiza.

"How!—sooner?"

"Yes, if we have sent out our spies, they on their side must have done as much with respect to us."

"Well?"

"Well, there are some of their men now in our neighbourhood."

"How do you know?—Have you heard their voices—have you recognised their footsteps?"

"No, but I heard a stag pass, and I know by the rapidity of his course that he must have been startled from his lair."

"So you think that we are tracked by some one?"

"I am sure of it. Hush!"

"What?"

"Listen."

"In fact I did hear something."

"It is the flight of a cock of the wood, which has risen two hundred paces off."

"On what side?"

"There," said Laiza, extending his arm in the direction of a clump of trees whose topmost branches might be discovered appearing above the brink of the ravine. "Stay," continued the negro; "see!—there he goes within thirty feet of us, on the other side of the road that lies at the foot of the rock."

"And you think that it has been started by a man."

"One man or several men," replied Laiza; "I cannot exactly tell the number."

"I did not mean that. You think that it has been started by a human being?"

"Animals recognise by instinct the sounds made by their own species, and are not terrified," replied Laiza.

"So that——"

"Some one comes—Hist!" added the negro after a pause, and lowering his voice, "do you not hear?"

"What is it?" inquired the old man, using the same precaution.

"The sound of a dry branch crackling under some one's foot. Keep silence, for they are now sufficiently close to us to hear the sound of our voices. Hide yourself behind the trunk of the tree, and I shall resume my former position."

And Laiza again took up the position he had just quitted, while Pierre Munier glided behind the tree, and the negroes who accompanied him, lost in its deep shadows, remained standing erect, mute and motionless as antique statues. There was a dead silence for an instant, during which not a sound or movement disturbed the quiet of the night; but a few seconds had scarcely elapsed when the listeners heard the sound of a flint which, displaced from its bed of clay, rolled rapidly down the steep slope of the precipice. Laiza felt Pierre Munier's breath upon his cheek. The latter would doubtless have spoken, but the negro seized him firmly by the arm: the old man understood the signal and was silent. At the same instant the cock of the woods again took to flight, and uttering his shrill cry, passed over the top of the tamarind tree and gained the upper regions of the mountain. The spy was therefore scarcely twenty paces distant from those whose traces he sought. Laiza and Pierre Munier were breathless; the other negroes seemed turned to stone.

At this moment a silvery light began to tinge the topmost heights of the chain of mountains which were visible through the openings of the forest on the distant horizon. Shortly afterwards the moon appeared from behind the Creole Mountain, and began her course through the hea-

vens. Contrary to the shadows, which had ascended from the valleys upward, the light descended from the hills to the low grounds, reaching however only the uncovered spots, and leaving the remainder of the forest, with the exception of some portions of the surface which it enlightened through the spaces left in the foliage, in profound obscurity.

Just then, a slight movement was perceptible in the branches of a thicket which grew by the path side, and which was slightly elevated above the shelving ground which led, as we have before mentioned, to a precipice; then by degrees the branches were carefully put aside and gave passage to the head of a man. Notwithstanding the darkness, less profound however at this spot unshadowed as it was by the foliage of any tree, Pierre Munier and Laiza remarked at the same moment the motion given to the thicket, for their hands, which had mutually sought each other, met and clasped at the same instant. The spy remained for an instant motionless; then he again protruded his head, interrogating with both eye and ear the whole of the uncovered space, made another movement forward, and re-assured by the silence which seemed to indicate the utter solitude of the spot, he raised himself upon his knees, listened anew, but neither seeing nor hearing anything, ended by rising to his feet.

Laiza then pressed Pierre Munier's hand still more strongly, in order to recommend to him a still greater degree of prudence, for he had no longer any doubt that this man sought their track. In fact, having reached the path, the nocturnal wanderer again stooped down and carefully examined the earth to see if it had retained any trace of the march of a body of men. He touched the grass with the flat of his hand to discover if it had been crushed, felt the flints with the tips of his fingers to discover by this means if they had been moved from their original positions; and lastly, as if the air itself had power to preserve the traces of those whom he sought, he raised his head, and fixed his eyes on the tamarind tree, under the shadow of which Laiza was concealed.

At this moment a ray of moonlight gleamed between the tops of two trees, and illuminated the features of the spy. With a movement quick as lightning, *Laiza* disengaged his right hand from that of *Pierre Munier*, and springing with one bound so as to seize by its extremity one of the most flexible branches of the tree which sheltered him, he plunged with the rapidity of the swooping eagle to the foot of the rock, seized the spy by the waist-belt, and giving, by a vigorous blow of his foot against the ground, an impulse to the branch, he remounted with him as an eagle ascends with its prey. Then letting his hand glide along the smooth and polished bark which clothed the branch, he alighted at the foot of the tree in the midst of his companions, still holding his prisoner, who, knife in hand, sought vainly to wound his conqueror, as the serpent seeks in vain to bite the king of the air, who, from the depths of a swamp, bears him aloft to his far distant eyrie. Then notwithstanding the obscurity, each at the first glance recognised in the prisoner the person of *Antonio the Malay*. All this had passed in a manner so sudden and unexpected, that *Antonio* had not uttered a cry.

At length then *Laiza* held in his power his mortal enemy, and would thus be able to punish at one blow the traitor and the assassin. He had pressed him down to the earth with his knee, and was gazing at him with that terrible irony of a conqueror, in which the vanquished can feel that there is no longer a hope left, when all at once the distant baying of a dog was heard. Without relaxing the iron grasp with which he held his enemy, *Laiza* raised his head and listened attentively in the direction from which the sounds proceeded.

At this sound *Laiza* felt *Antonio* tremble beneath him.

"Everything in its time," murmured *Laiza*, as if speaking to himself; then addressing himself to the negroes who stood by, he said: "In the first place tie this man to a tree; I must speak with *M. Munier*."

The negroes seized *Antonio* and bound him hand and foot with slips of bamboo to the trunk of a *taka-maka* tree. *Laiza* first assured himself that he was

securely fastened; then leading the old man some steps aside, he extended his hand in the direction from which the baying of the dog had first been heard.

"Did you hear?" said he.

"What?" asked the old man.

"The baying of a dog."

"No."

"Listen! it approaches."

"Yes, now I hear it."

"They are hunting us as they would deer."

"What! you think then that it is us they pursue?"

"What else do you imagine it can be?"

"Some dog escaped from its kennel, hunting for its own pleasure."

"After all, that is just possible!" murmured Laiza; "listen for a moment."

There was a dead silence for an instant, at the termination of which the baying again resounded through the forest, nearer than at first.

"It is us whom they pursue," said Laiza.

"What makes you think so?"

"That it is not the bark of a hunting dog," said Laiza; "it is the howling of an animal seeking his master. The demons have discovered in some of the negro huts a dog on the chain, and have taken him for a guide; if the negro is with us we are lost."

"It is the voice of Fidèle," murmured Pierre Munier, trembling.

"Yes, yes, I recognise it now," said Laiza; "it is the same who howled yesterday night when we were bringing your son to Moka."

"In fact I forgot to take him with us when we started; but yet somehow I think if it were Fidèle he would run quicker. Hark! how slowly the cry approaches."

"They have him in a leash and are following him; he perhaps leads an entire regiment behind him. It is of no use being angry with the poor animal," added the Anjouan negro, with a gloomy laugh, "he cannot go any quicker; but rest easy, he will arrive in time."

"Well," inquired Pierre Munier, "what is to be done?"

"If you had any vessel under your orders at Grand Port, I would say that as we are now but eight or ten leagues from it we have time to reach it; but you have no chance of flight on that side, have you?"

"None whatever."

"Then we must defend ourselves, and if necessary," added the negro in a gloomy voice, "die in our own defence."

"Come then," said Pierre Munier, whose courage never rose to the full height but when facing actual and tangible danger, "come then, for the dog will lead them to the entrance of the cavern; but even when they get there they will not easily effect an entrance."

"'Tis well," said Laiza; "go then to the intrenchments."

"But why do you not come with me?"

"I must remain here a few moments longer."

"You will rejoin us soon?"

"At the first shot that is fired, turn and you shall see me at your side."

The old man held out his hand to Laiza, for the common danger had effaced all distinctions of rank between them; he then threw his fowling-piece over his shoulder, and followed by his escort he proceeded with rapid steps towards the entrance of the cavern.

Laiza followed him with his eyes until he lost sight of his retreating figure amid the dense shadows of the forest; then returning to Antonio, who according to his orders had been secured to the tree, he said:

"And now, Malay, for our little affair!"

"Now for our little affair!" repeated the Malay, in a trembling voice; "and what then does Laiza desire of his friend and brother?"

"I desire that he recall to his mind what was said the evening of the Yamsé on the banks of the Lataniers river."

"Many things were said, and my brother Laiza was very eloquent, for every one was of his opinion."

"And among all these things, does not Antonio remember the sentence which was pronounced beforehand against all traitors?"

Antonio trembled from head to foot, and despite the copper-coloured hue of his skin, had it been daylight he might have been seen to turn pale.

"It would appear that my brother has lost his memory," resumed Laiza, with an accent of terrible irony; "ah! well I must restore it to him. It was said, 'that if there should be a traitor among us, whenever the treason shall be discovered and proved, any one of us may put him to death at that instant, employing whatever means of death he pleases to inflict.' Are not these the very words of the oath, and does not my brother remember them?"

"I remember them," said Antonio, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Then reply to the questions I am now going to put to you," said Laiza.

"I know not what right you have to question me; you are not my judge," cried Antonio.

"In that case I shall not interrogate you," returned Laiza; then turning to the negroes who were lying upon the ground round him: "Rise, men," said he, "and reply."

The negroes obeyed; and ten or twelve dusky figures arose from the earth and ranged themselves silently in a semi-circle around the tree to which Antonio was secured.

"These are slaves," cried Antonio, "and I ought not to be judged by slaves; I am not a negro, I am a free-man, and it is for a court of justice to sentence me if I have committed a crime, and not you."

"Enough," said Laiza, "we shall judge you first, and afterwards you may appeal to whatsoever court you please."

Antonio was silent, and during the pause which followed Laiza's injunctions, might be heard the baying of the dog.

"Since the accused will not reply," said Laiza,

addressing the negroes who surrounded Antonio, "you must reply for him. Who was it that denounced the conspiracy to the governor, because another than himself had been elected chief?"

"Antonio the Malay," replied all the negroes, in a low voice but with one accord.

"That is not true," cried Antonio. "That is not true; I swear it—I protest it!"

"Silence!" said Laiza, in the same commanding tone; then he continued: "Who was it who, after having denounced the conspiracy to the governor, fired that shot at our chief, at the foot of the Little Mountain, which wounded him?"

"Antonio the Malay," replied all the negroes.

"Who saw me do it?" cried the Malay. "Who dares to say that it was I; who can distinguish one man from another in the night?"

"Silence!" said Laiza; then resuming with the same calm accent his examination: "Lastly," said he, "after having betrayed the conspiracy to the governor, after having attempted the assassination of our chief, who was it who has come again in the night, crawling like a serpent round our retreat, to discover some opening by which the soldiers could enter?"

"Antonio the Malay," replied the negroes, for the third time, with that accent of conviction which had not left them for a moment.

"I came to rejoin my brothers," cried the prisoner; "I came to share their lot whatever it might be; I swear it—I protest it."

"Do you believe what he says?" demanded Laiza.

"No, no, no!" repeated every voice.

"My good friends! my dear friends!" said Antonio, "listen to me, I beseech you."

"Silence!" exclaimed Laiza; then with the same solemn accent which he had still preserved and which indicated the fearful nature of the task he had imposed upon himself, he continued: "Antonio is not therefore once but three times a traitor; Antonio would therefore merit three deaths if any one could die three times. An-

tonio prepare yourself to appear before the Great Spirit, for you are about to die."

"It is an assassination!" cried Antonio, "and you have no right to assassinate a free-man; besides the English cannot be very far distant; I will call—I will cry out. Help! help!—they wish to murder me!—they want——"

Laiza seized the Malay by the throat, and stifled his cries beneath his iron grasp; then turning his head towards the negroes:

"Bring a rope," said he.

On hearing this order, which indicated the fate that awaited him, Antonio made so violent an effort that he burst asunder some of the bonds which secured him. But he was unable to disengage himself from the most terrible of all, the hand of Laiza. In the course of a few moments, however, the negro found by the convulsive movements which agitated the body of the Malay, that if he continued his grasp any longer the cord would become useless. He accordingly loosened his hold of the prisoner's throat, who let his head fall upon his breast, like a man at the last gasp of breath.

"I said that I would leave you time to appear before the Great Spirit," said Laiza;—"you have ten minutes, prepare yourself."

Antonio endeavoured to utter a few words, but his voice failed him. The baying of the dog was again heard, approaching every instant nearer and nearer.

"Where is the rope?" said Laiza.

"Here it is," replied a negro, presenting to Laiza the article demanded.

"Good," said the latter.

And as the office of judge was over, that of executioner now commenced. Laiza seized one of the strongest branches of the tamarind tree, drew it down towards him, fixed to it securely one of the extremities of the rope, made at the other end a running noose which he passed round the neck of Antonio, directed two of his men to hold the branch, and having satisfied himself that the condemned, despite the rupture of two

or three of the bonds which held him, was still secure, he invited him for the second time to prepare for death.

This time speech returned to the criminal, but in place of using it to implore mercy of God, it was to make one last appeal to the pity of men that he raised his voice.

"Well, yes, my brothers, yes, my friends," said he, changing his tactics, and endeavouring to obtain by abject confession what had been refused to his denials; "yes, I am indeed culpable, and I confess you have the right to treat me as you do; but you will pardon your old acquaintance, will you not? Antonio who has made you laugh so many times during the long evenings?—poor Antonio who told you so many beautiful stories and sung you so many merry songs?—what will become of you now without him?—who will amuse you? who will distract you from your heavy thoughts?—who will cause you to forget the toils of the day? Mercy, my friends, mercy for poor Antonio! Life! life! my friends, I ask it from you on my knees!"

"Think of the Great Spirit, Antonio," said Laiza, "for you have but five minutes longer to live."

"In place of these five minutes, Laiza—my good Laiza," continued Antonio, in a suppliant voice, "give me five years, and during these five years I will be your slave; I shall be ever ready at your command, and when I fail—when I commit the slightest fault—well, then you shall punish me, and I will bear the whip—the rod—the rope—without complaining, and I will proclaim that you are a good master, for you have given me life. Oh, life! life! Laiza—life is all I ask."

"Listen to me Antonio," said Laiza, "do you hear the baying of that dog?"

"Yes; and you think that it is I who advised them to unloose it? Well, no, you are wrong, indeed you are—I swear it."

"Antonio," said Laiza, "the idea of using a dog to pursue his own master would never have occurred to a white man; Antonio, this idea is yours also."

The Malay uttered a deep groan; then after a mo-

ment's pause, as if he had hoped by dint of humility to soften his enemy, he said:

"Well, yes, it was my idea; the Great Spirit had abandoned me, the thirst for vengeance had rendered me mad. You must have pity on a madman, Laiza;—in the name of your brother Nazim, pardon me!

"And who was it that denounced Nazim, when Nazim sought to fly? Ah! that was a name you ought not to have uttered, Antonio;—the five minutes are elapsed. Malay, you are about to die!"

"Oh! no, no, no! do not kill me!" exclaimed the wretched Malay; "mercy, Laiza! mercy—friends, mercy!"

But deaf to the cries, the prayers, the supplications of the condemned criminal, Laiza drew out his knife, and with one cut severed all the thongs which held Antonio to the tree. At the same instant and upon an order from him, the two men let go the branch from their hands, and it immediately regained its former position, carrying upwards with it the body of the wretched Antonio. One last and terrible cry, a cry in which seemed concentrated all the strength of despair, escaped from the mouth of the condemned and died away, mournful, solitary, desolate, in the recesses of the forest. All was over, and the body of Antonio was no longer but a ghastly corpse, swinging to and fro at the end of a rope over the precipice. Laiza remained for an instant longer, motionless, gazing at the vibration of the rope, which became steady by degrees. Then when it appeared as a perpendicular and almost motionless line against the dark azure of the sky, he again lent his ear to the baying of the dog which was now scarcely five hundred paces from the cavern, and lifting his musket which he had deposited upon the ground, he turned round to the other negroes:

"Come, my friends," said he "we are avenged, we can now die;" and followed by his escort he proceeded with rapid steps towards the intrenchments.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE NEGRO CHASE.

LAIZA was not deceived, and the dog, following up the track of his master, led the English directly to the entrance of the cavern. Arrived there, he darted into the thicket and commenced scratching violently against the stones. The English then found that they had reached the termination of their journey. A party of pioneers armed with pickaxes were set to work, and in the course of a few moments an opening large enough to admit a man was effected in the wall. A soldier now raised himself up in order to look through the opening; but scarcely had he done so when a shot was heard, and the man fell backwards, pierced through the heart by a musket ball. A second soldier succeeded the first and fell like him; a third advanced in his turn and met a similar fate. It was evident that the rebels by giving, themselves, the signal of attack, had decided upon making a desperate stand against the military. The assailants now began to take precautions. While sheltering themselves as much as they could, they succeeded in enlarging the breach so as to admit of the passage of several men abreast. The order to advance was then given, and the grenadiers with fixed bayonets moved on to the attack. But the advantages were so greatly in favour of the besieged, that in an instant the breach was encumbered with dead men, so that they were obliged to remove the bodies of the slain to make room for a fresh assault. This time the soldiers succeeded in penetrating into the middle of the cavern, but it was only to leave behind them a still greater number of victims than on the first attack. Concealed behind the intrenchment which George had caused to be erected, the negroes, directed by Laiza and Pierre Munier, kept up a deadly fire upon their assailants.

During this time, George, confined by his wound to his litter in the hut, cursed the state of inactivity to which he found himself reduced. The smoke and

fumes of powder which enveloped him, the rattling of musketry which sounded in his ears, all gave him that ardent thirst for the combat which induces a man to stake his life upon a cast. But in the present case it was much worse; for it was not a foreign cause for which they were now combating—it was not the caprice of a king which was to be sustained, nor the honour of a nation which was to be avenged: no, it was his own cause that these men were defending; and he—George—the lion-hearted—the enterprising, could do nothing either in action or in counsel. George tore with his teeth the mattress on which he lay, and wept with rage and vexation. At the second attack, in which the British had succeeded in penetrating into the middle of the cavern, they fired from the point to which they had attained, a few rounds upon the intrenchments; and as the hut in which George lay was placed directly behind them, two or three balls passed whistling through the interstices of the foliage. This sound which would have terrified another, consoled and gratified George; he also then ran some danger, and if he could not deal out death himself he could at least die.

The British troops now ceased firing for a moment; but it was evident that they were preparing for a fresh assault, and the besieged were aware by the low and unintermitting sounds of the pickaxe, that they had not abandoned their project. In fact, in the course of a few moments a portion of the exterior defences of the cavern gave way, and the opening was now increased to double its former width. Again the word of command was given, and by the pale moonlight, the besieged could discern the bayonets of the grenadiers glistening for the third time at the entrance of the cavern. This time Pierre Munier and Laiza exchanged glances; it was evident that the conflict would be a terrible one.

“What is your last resource?” demanded Laiza.

“The cavern is mined,” replied the old man.

“In that case we have still some chance of safety;

but when the decisive moment comes, act as I shall tell you or we are all lost; for no possible retreat can be effected with a wounded man."

"Then I shall die by his side," said the old man.

"Better to save both."

"Together?"

"Together or separately, what does it matter?"

"I shall not quit my son, Laiza, I warn you."

"You will quit him if it is the only means left of ensuring his safety."

"What do you mean?"

"I will explain myself by-and-by."

Then turning to the negroes:

"Come, my children," said he, "the decisive moment has now arrived. Fire upon the red coats, and do not lose a single shot. In another hour powder and ball will be scarce."

At the same instant they fired a volley. The negroes are in general excellent marksmen; consequently Laiza's orders were executed to the letter, and several gaps took place in the ranks of the British; but at each discharge the ranks were filled up with admirable discipline, and the column, although retarded by the difficulties of the passage, continued to advance through the cavern. Not a shot however was fired by the English. They appeared this time determined to carry the intrenchment at the point of the bayonet.

The situation, serious for all, was doubly so for George, powerless as he was from the effect of his wounds. He had first raised himself upon his elbow, then he scrambled up upon his knees, and at last succeeded in rising to his feet; but having reached this point, his weakness was so great that the earth seemed to fail under him, and he was obliged to cling with both hands to the branches which surrounded him. While recognising the dauntless courage of that handful of devoted men who followed his fortunes to the end, he could not help admiring the cool and impassible courage exhibited by the British troops, who continued to advance as though they were

on parade, although at each step they took, they were obliged to fill up their ranks. At last he felt convinced that this time they would recoil no more, and that in five minutes, despite the fire which was kept up, they would undoubtedly carry the intrenchments.

Then the idea that it was for him—for him, obliged to remain a passive spectator of the combat—that all these men were being destroyed, presented itself to his mind with a feeling of remorse. He endeavoured to take a step forward to throw himself between the combatants, and by the sacrifice of his own person, since in all probability it was he alone whom they sought, to stay the carnage; but he felt that he could not traverse a third of the distance which separated him from the British. He strove to cry aloud to the besieged to cease firing, to the assailants to advance no farther, and that he would render himself a prisoner; but his feeble voice was lost in the din of battle. Besides at this moment he beheld his father, a lighted pine branch in his hand, raise himself above the intrenchments, and proceed a few steps towards the enemy, then amid the fire and smoke apply his strange torch to the earth. Forthwith a train of flame ran along the ground for a short distance, and at length buried itself in the soil. In another moment the very earth heaved under the feet of the combatants; a terrible explosion was heard, a flaming crater opened under the feet of the English, the vault of the cavern was rent asunder and flew into fragments, the overhanging rocks gave way, and loosening from their beds rolled inwards into the cavity, and amid the cries of the remainder of the regiment still on the other side of the opening, the subterranean passage disappeared in the chaos!

"And now," exclaimed Laiza, "we have not an instant to lose."

"Command what must be done!"

"Fly towards Grand Port—endeavour to find shelter on board some French vessel; I shall take charge of George."

"I have already said that I shall not leave my son."

"And I have said you shall quit him, for by remaining you will destroy him."

"How so?"

"With your dog, which they have still in their possession, they can follow you everywhere; hide yourselves in the darkest forest, bury yourselves in the deepest caverns, and George, wounded, will soon be overtaken; but if on the contrary you fly, they will imagine that your son accompanies you. Then it is to you that they will attach themselves, it is after you that they will howl, it is you that they may perhaps overtake. In the meantime I shall profit by the night. With four tried men I will carry off George in an opposite direction, and we shall gain the wood which surrounds the Bamboo Mountain. If you have any means of saving us, you will light a fire upon the Ile des Oiseaux; then we will descend the Great River upon a raft, and you can come ashore in a skiff and take us off."

Pierre Munier listened to this pleading with eyes fixed and respiration suspended, grasping the hands of Laiza within his own; then at his last words, throwing his arms round the neck of his companion: "Laizal Laizal!" cried he, "yes, yes, I understand you. There are no other means left. Let the English hunt me, and in the meantime you save George."

"I shall save him or die with him," replied Laiza; "that is all I can promise."

"And I know that you will keep your promise. Wait only till I once more embrace my child, and then I go."

"No, no," said Laiza; "if you see him, you will not consent to leave him. If he knows that you are exposing yourself to save his life, he will not permit it. Go, go, and all of you follow him. Let four men only remain with me, the strongest, the most determined, the most devoted."

Twelve men presented themselves. Laiza chose out four. Then as Pierre Munier still hesitated to depart: "The English! the English!" said he to the old man; "in an instant the English will be upon us."

"At the mouth of the Great River then!" cried Pierre Munier.

"Yes, if we are neither shot nor taken prisoners."

"Farewell, George, farewell!" cried Pierre Munier, and followed by the main body of negroes, he darted off in the direction of the Creole Mountain.

"Father!" cried George, "where are you going? What are you doing? Why do you not come to die along with your son? Father! I am here, wait for me."

But Pierre Munier was already far distant, and these last words were uttered in a voice so very feeble that the old man did not hear them. Laiza ran to the wounded man; he found him upon his knees. "My father," murmured George, and he fell backwards in a swoon. Laiza lost no further time; this swoon was almost fortunate. Doubtless George, if in the full possession of his reason, would have endeavoured to dispute still further his life with those who pursued him, and would have regarded this retreat as a dastardly flight. But his weakness put him entirely in Laiza's power. The negro laid him, still in a swoon, upon his litter; the four blacks seized the poles, and he himself preceding them to point out the way, the party directed their steps towards the quarter of the Trois Ilots, from whence he hoped by following the course of the Great River to gain the Piton du Bambou. They had not proceeded a quarter of a league on their way, ere they heard the baying of the dog. Laiza made a sign, and the bearers stopped. George was still in a fainting state, or at least so feeble that he appeared unconscious of what was passing around him. What Laiza had foreseen came to pass. The English had scaled the boundary rocks, and reckoned upon the services of the dog to overtake the fugitives a second time as they had already done on the first occasion.

There was a moment of intense agony, during which Laiza listened to the baying of the dog. For some moments those bayings remained stationary. The dog had reached the spot where the engagement had taken

place; then two or three times the barking drew nearer. The dog went from the intrenchments to the hut in which George had lain for some time, and whither his father had several times come to see him. At length the bayings slowly died away towards the south, which was the direction Pierre Munier had taken. The stratagem practised by Laiza had been successful; the hunters were deceived in their trail—they followed the father and abandoned the son.

The situation from which our fugitives had but just escaped was so much the more serious, that during this momentary halt the first dawn of day had begun to appear, and the mysterious obscurity of the forest began by degrees to be lightened. Certainly had George been unhurt, and strong and active as he formerly was, the embarrassment would have been slight, for stratagem, courage, address, all would have been found in equal proportions between pursurers and pursued; but George's wound rendered the game unequal, and Laiza could not dissemble from himself that their present situation was a most critical one. One cause of anxiety above all weighed upon him; it was, lest the English, as was very probable, had enlisted as auxiliaries the slaves trained to the pursuit of the maroons, and had made them some promise, such as liberty for example, if George should fall into their hands. In that case Laiza would lose a portion of his advantages; he was a man of nature opposed to other men, sons of nature like himself, and for whom as for himself, solitude had no secrets, night no mysteries. Under these circumstances he considered that there was no time to lose, and his mind once made up as to the direction taken by their pursuers, he proceeded onwards, still marching towards the east.

The forest wore a strange aspect, and all the animals appeared to partake of the anxiety evinced by man. The musketry which had resounded all the night had scared the birds from their leafy coverts, the boars from their dens, the deer from their lairs; all had started afrighted from their rest, and it might have been supposed that all these animated beings had been seized

with a species of vertigo. They proceeded thus for the space of two hours, when it became necessary to call a halt, as the negroes had fought all night and had not tasted food since four o'clock the preceding evening. Laiza halted under the ruins of an ajoupa which beyond a doubt had that very night served as a retreat for the maroons, for on removing a pile of ashes which had apparently lain there for a length of time, they found fire beneath. Three negroes started off in chase of some tanrecks; the fourth occupied himself in re-lighting the fire, whilst Laiza sought some herbs to renew the dressings of the wounded man.

Though strong in body and powerful in mind as George undoubtedly was, mind had on this occasion however been overcome by matter. He was in a high fever, delirious, and ignorant of what was passing around him, and could no longer aid, either by word or action, those who sought to save him. The dressing of the wound however appeared to give him some repose. As to Laiza, he appeared as though superior to all the physical wants of nature. For sixty hours he had not slept, and yet appeared not to need sleep; for twenty hours he had not tasted food, and yet he seemed not the least hungry.

The negroes returned one after the other, bringing in about six or eight tanrecks, which they immediately made preparations to roast before the immense fire their companion had lighted. The smoke which it occasioned caused Laiza some slight uneasiness indeed; but he reflected that not having left any trace behind him, he ought to be now at least two or three leagues from the spot where the battle had taken place, and that even supposing this smoke should be discovered, it would be from some post so far distant as to give him time to escape before they could reach him. When the repast had been prepared the negroes summoned Laiza who until then had remained seated beside George. Laiza rose, and while glancing his eye over the group he was preparing to join, he perceived that one of the negroes had received a wound in the thigh which was still bleeding.

In an instant all his former security vanished; they could now follow him by the trace of the blood as they would a wounded deer; not that they would for a moment suspect the importance of the capture they should make by following them, but because a prisoner, whomsoever he might be, was of too great importance in the present state of affairs, on account of the information he could give, for the English not to try all means in their power to capture him.

At the moment when this idea entered his mind, and as he was opening his lips to give orders to the four negroes grouped round the fire, to prepare instantly to set out on their march again, a little clump of trees, more thickly clad with foliage than the rest of the forest, and upon which he had more than once fixed an uneasy eye, suddenly lighted up; a rapid succession of shots were heard, and five or six bullets whistled round him. One of the negroes fell forward with his face in the fire; the three others rose, but after running five or six paces one of them fell in his turn; then another, ten paces farther; the fourth alone got off untouched and disappeared in the forest. At the sight of the smoke, on hearing the sound of the reports and the whistling of the balls, Laiza made but one bound from the spot on which he stood to George's litter; and taking the wounded man in his arms as if he had been a child, he in his turn darted into the forest without his course appearing to be for an instant checked by the burthen he carried. But almost simultaneously eight or ten English soldiers, accompanied by five or six negroes, rushed out of the thicket and started in pursuit of the fugitives, in one of whom they recognised George, whom they knew to be wounded. As Laiza had feared, the blood had served them as a guide; and following up its trace had arrived unperceived within half gun-shot of the ajoupa.

Then commenced a desperate race, for it was evident that whatever might be the strength and agility of Laiza, unless he could succeed in escaping from the sight of his pursuers, the latter could not fail in soon overtaking him.

Unfortunately he ran two chances almost equally fatal: by striking into the thickest of the forest, the density of the foliage and underwood would become insuperable barriers to his advance, by keeping in the open glades he would expose himself to the view of his enemies; he preferred however this latter course. In the first few minutes, from the vigour of his first start, Laiza found himself almost out of musket-shot, and if he had had to do with the English alone he would have without doubt escaped them; but although it was perhaps against their own inclination that the negroes pursued him, they were compelled to advance.

From time to time when a glimpse of Laiza could be discovered through the trees, a few shots were fired, and they could see the bullets cut the foliage on either side of him, or tear up the earth at his very feet; but as if by enchantment, none of these balls touched him, and his speed seemed as it were to increase in ratio to the danger which he incurred. At length they reached the border of an open glade. A steep and almost uncovered hillock, tufted at the summit with a fresh succession of trees, presented itself to be climbed; but once at the top of this slope Laiza could at least disappear behind some rock, or glide into some ravine, and thus conceal himself from the sight of his pursuers: but then during the entire interval occupied in passing from tree to tree, he would remain uncovered and exposed to the fire of his enemies. There was no other course however to be taken; to throw himself to the right or left would be to lose time; fortune had until then favoured the fugitives, the same good fortune might still accompany them. Laiza darted into the glade. His pursuers on their side, seeing the chance which they now had of firing at an advantage, redoubled their efforts. They reached the borders of the glade; Laiza was about a hundred and fifty paces in advance. Then as if the order had been given, each stopped, raised his musket to his shoulder, and fired. Laiza appeared untouched and continued his course. The soldiers had still time to re-charge their pieces before he should altogether dis-

appear; each hastily slipt a cartridge into his musket and prepared to fire.

During this time Laiza had gained ground enormously. It was evident that if he escaped the second discharge as he had done the first, and gained the wood unhurt, all chances were in his favour. Twenty-five paces only separated him from the skirts of the wood, and during this momentary halt he had gained a hundred and fifty paces upon his adversaries. All at once he disappeared in a hollow of the earth, but unfortunately this sinuosity was not prolonged either to the right or left; he followed it however as long as he could, in order to embarrass his enemies, but having reached the extremity of the little ravine, the natural bastion of which had hitherto protected him, he was obliged once more to climb the hillock and consequently to re-appear. At this moment ten or twelve shots were discharged together, and it seemed to the men-hunters that their prey tottered. In fact, after having taken a few more steps forward, Laiza stopped, staggered again, fell upon one knee, then upon both, placed George upon the earth, and then raising himself to his feet, he turned towards the English, extended his arms towards them with one last gesture of menace and defiance, and drawing his knife from his waistbelt, he buried it up to the hilt in his breast.

The soldiers darted forward uttering loud shouts of joy, like huntsmen at the death of a stag. For some seconds yet, Laiza maintained his erect position; then all at once he fell like an uprooted tree;—the blade of the knife had pierced his heart. On reaching the spot where the two fugitives lay, the soldiers found Laiza dead, and George almost expiring. By a last effort, George had torn the dressings from his wound, that he might not fall alive into the hands of his enemies, and the blood now flowed from it in streams.

As to Laiza, besides the wound which he had inflicted with his own hand, he had received a ball in the thigh, and another which, passing through the back, had pierced his chest.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE REHEARSAL.

ALL that passed during the two or three days which followed the catastrophe we have detailed in the preceding chapter, left but a very faint impression on George's mind. His intellect, disturbed by delirium, retained only vague perceptions, which allowed him to calculate neither time nor space, nor even to link the succession of events together. One morning, however, he awoke as from a sleep disturbed by terrible dreams, and opening his eyes, discovered that he was in a prison. The surgeon of the regiment then quartered in Port Louis was beside him.

By endeavouring to collect his scattered thoughts, George was enabled to arrive at a general idea of what had occurred, although his impressions were dim and indistinct, like the effect of objects seen through a mist. All was indeed present to his mind, up to the moment he had been wounded: his return to Moka and his departure from thence with his father, had not altogether escaped his memory; but from the hour of his arrival in the great woods, all was vague, shadowy, dreamlike. The only incontestable, positive, and fatal reality was, that he was now in the hands of his enemies. George was too proud to ask any questions, too haughty to request any favour; he could therefore know nothing of what was passing without; but within the recesses of his heart, he nourished two terrible causes of anxiety. Was his father safe? Did Sara still love him? These two thoughts filled his entire soul; when one vanished it was but to give place to the other. But there were no outward appearances of this tempest of the soul. George's countenance remained pale, cold, and calm as that of a marble statue, and that not only before those who visited his prison, but also before himself.

When the physician found that the wounded man

was strong enough to bear an examination, he informed the authorities, and the following day an officer, accompanied by a clerk, entered his apartment. George was not yet able to quit his bed, but nevertheless he did the honours of his chamber to the two magistrates, with patience and dignity, and raising himself upon his elbow, declared that he was prepared to reply to all questions that might be addressed to him.

Our readers are too well acquainted with George's character, to imagine that the idea of denying any of the facts which were imputed to him, presented itself for a single instant to his mind. Not only did he reply with the greatest veracity to all questions asked, but still more, he engaged, on the following day when he should be a little stronger, to dictate himself to the clerk a detailed account of the entire conspiracy. This offer was too handsome a one to be refused by justice.

George had a double purpose in making this proposal: in the first place, to hasten the course of the trial, and in the second, to take the entire responsibility of the revolt upon himself.

The following morning the two magistrates again presented themselves. George gave the recital he had promised; only as he passed over in silence the propositions which had been made to him by Laiza, he was interrupted by the senior magistrate, who begged him to observe that he had omitted one circumstance in his narrative, which on account of the death of Laiza was no longer chargeable to any one. Thus, George learned for the first time the death of Laiza and the circumstances which had accompanied it; for, as regarded himself, all this portion of his life, as we have already said, was a complete blank. He did not once pronounce his father's name, nor was it once mentioned by his visitors; and for a still stronger reason, as may be easily imagined, the name of Sara either. The declaration made by George rendered all further interrogatories perfectly useless; and he therefore ceased to receive any visits except those of the doctor. One morning on entering his room, the doctor found him up.

“Monsieur,” said he, “I forbade you to rise from your bed for some days yet; you are still too weak.”

“That is to say, my dear doctor,” replied George, “that you do me the wrong of confounding me with ordinary criminals, who endeavour to defer as long as possible the day of trial: but for my part, I frankly confess that I have hastened to bring matters to a conclusion; and in conscience now, do you imagine that it is necessary to be so well cured merely to die?”

“But who told you that you will be condemned to death?” said the doctor.

“My conscience, doctor. I have played a game of which the stake was my head! I have lost, and I am ready to pay.”

“No matter,” said the doctor; “my opinion is, that you still require some days’ further repose, before exposing yourself to the fatigues of a trial and the anxieties consequent upon a verdict.”

But that same day, George wrote to the judge to inform him that he was perfectly recovered, and consequently at the entire disposal of justice. On the following morning the trial commenced.

George, on his entering the court, looked uneasily round him, and saw with joy that he was the only one accused. Then he gazed proudly and firmly round the spectators; almost the entire population of the city was present at the trial, with the exception of M. de Malmédie, Henri, and Sara. A few among the spectators appeared to entertain a sentiment of pity towards the accused, but the greater portion of the faces present displayed no other expression but one of gratified hatred. As for George, he was calm and haughty as ever. He was dressed in his usual attire—a black frock coat and cravat, and white waistcoat and trousers. His double ribbon was knotted at his button-hole. They had appointed him a counsel, for George had refused to make any choice, his intention being that none should endeavour even to plead his cause.

What George said was not a defence; it was the history of his entire life. He did not attempt to conceal

the fact that he had returned to the Isle of France for the express purpose of combating, by all means in his power, the prejudice that weighed upon men of colour. He uttered not a single word however respecting the causes which had hastened the execution of his project.

A judge asked some questions on the subject of M. de Malmedie; but George requested permission to be silent on that head.

Despite the facilities offered by George to the tribunal, the trial lasted three days: even when they have nothing to say, lawyers will talk.

The attorney-general spoke for four consecutive hours; he overwhelmed George with a torrent of words.

George listened to this long harangue, with the greatest calmness, inclining his head from time to time in token of confession and approval.

Then, when the speech was concluded, the president asked George if he had anything to say.

"Nothing," replied George, "except that the attorney-general has spoken very eloquently."

The attorney-general bowed. The president now announced that the trial was over, and George was conducted back to prison: the verdict was to be pronounced in the absence of the accused, and was afterwards to be read to him in prison.

On George's return to his prison, he asked for paper and ink in order to write his will. As the verdict did not include confiscation, he could dispose of his property as he pleased. He left to the doctor who had attended him, a thousand pounds sterling; to the governor of the prison, five hundred pounds; and to each of the turnkeys, a thousand piastres. To Sara he left a little gold ring which had belonged to his mother. As he was about to sign his name at the bottom of this testament, the crown-clerk entered the room. George rose, holding the pen in his hand; the clerk read the verdict. As George had all along felt assured, he was condemned to the punishment of death. The reading finished, George bowed, re-seated himself, and signed his name without *it being possible to observe the slightest alteration be-*

tween the writing of the body of the act and that of the signature. Then he walked to the glass and looked at himself, in order to see if he were paler than before. The same pale but calm features met his gaze. He was content with himself, and smiled as he murmured:

"Well, I believe there can be no greater emotion felt than that caused by hearing one's self condemned to death."

The doctor now came to see him, and asked him as usual how he felt.

"Why, very well, doctor," replied George; "you have made a wonderful cure, and it is annoying that they have not given you more time to complete it."

He then inquired if the mode of execution had been changed since the occupation of the island by the British. It was still the same, and this assurance gave George much pleasure. It was neither the ignoble gallows of London, nor the disgusting guillotine of Paris. No; an execution at Port Louis wore something of a picturesque and poetical character which was soothing to George's feelings. A negro servant of the executioner would decapitate him with an axe. It was thus that Charles I. and Mary Stuart, Cinq Mars and de Thon, had perished.

For George, this day passed over as the preceding ones had done. He wrote however to his father and brother. Once he took up his pen to write to Sara; but whatever was the motive which restrained him, he stopped suddenly, pushed aside the paper, and let his head fall into his hands. He remained thus for a length of time, and whoever could have seen him raise his head, which he did with his usual haughty and disdainful air, might have perceived that his eyes were slightly reddened, and that a tear still trembled at the end of the long black lashes which fringed them. Since the day when at the governor's he had refused the hand of the lovely Creole, not only had he not seen her, but he had not even heard her name mentioned. Still he could not believe that she had forgotten him. The night having come, George retired to rest at his usual hour, and slept as soundly as he had done the preceding nights. On rising the next

morning, he requested to see the governor of the prison.

"Monsieur," said he, "I have one favour to ask you."

"And what is it," replied the governor.

"I should like to converse for a few moments with the executioner."

"That will require an order from his Excellency the Governor."

"Oh!" said George, with a smile, "ask him from me; Lord William Murray is a gentleman, and he will not refuse this favour to an old friend."

The governor left the room, promising to make the request. As he retired a priest entered.

The venerable old man was one of those who do not occupy themselves in convincing you, but who speak with the force and authority of conviction. He was one of those men who, having been brought up amid the majestic scenes of Nature, has sought and found the Lord in his works. His was one of those serene and holy natures which attract to them the suffering hearts of the afflicted, and sustain and console them by sharing with them a portion of their individual sorrows. At the first words which George and the old man uttered, they mutually and with a common impulse exchanged a cordial grasp of the hand. It was a friendly conversation, and not a confession, which the old man received from his young companion; but, haughty before strength, George was humble before weakness. He accused himself of pride. It was, like that of Satan, the sin which had destroyed him. But, on the other hand, it was this pride which, even at this hour, sustained, strengthened, and made him great. It is true that greatness, according to man's definition of the term, is not greatness in the eye of God. Twenty times the name of Sara rose to the young man's lips; but each time did he repel it to the inmost recesses of his heart;—that dark abyss, the sepulchre of so many emotions, whose depth was concealed from mortal eyes by a cold and impassive exterior. Whilst the priest and the condemned were conversing together, the door opened and the governor of the prison entered.

"The man you wished to see," said he, "is outside, and waits until you can receive him."

George turned slightly pale, and an almost imperceptible shudder ran through his frame.

"Let him come in," said he.

A negro of vast height and Herculean proportions was introduced. The whole of the upper portion of his person was bare, and his large unmeaning eyes denoted the absence of all intelligence. He turned towards the governor who had introduced him, and gazing alternately at the priest and George :

"With which of these have I to do?" demanded he.

"With the young man," replied the governor, and he retired from the room.

"You are the executioner," said George, coldly.

"Yes," replied the negro.

"'Tis well. Come here, my friend, and reply to my questions."

The negro advanced two paces.

"You are aware, I suppose, that you are to execute me to-morrow?" said George.

"Yes," replied the negro.

"I have never seen a public execution," said George, "and as I am desirous that everything should be arranged in a regular manner, I have sent for you to give me some idea of its nature."

The negro did not understand; George was obliged to explain more clearly what he meant.

Upon this, the negro, by means of a stool, represented the block, led George to the proper distance at which he was to kneel, explained to him the manner in which it was necessary for him to place his head on the block, and promised him to cut it off at one blow.

Those last instructions given and received, George drew from his finger a brilliant.

"My friend," said he to the negro, "as I have no money here, and as I am unwilling that you should have altogether lost your time, accept this ring."

"I am forbidden to receive any presents from condemned prisoners," said the negro; "but I inherit from

them: leave it on your finger, and to-morrow when you are dead, I will withdraw it."

"Very good," replied George, and he coolly replaced the ring on his finger. The negro retired.

George turned round to the priest. The old man was as pale as death.

"My son," said the holy father, "I am very happy in having met with a soul so firm as yours. It will be the first time that I have ever accompanied a condemned criminal to the scaffold, and am fearful lest I should fail. You will sustain me, will you not?"

"Be assured of it, father," replied George.

The old man was, besides, the priest of a little church situated upon the road, in which the condemned prisoners ordinarily stopped to hear one last mass. It was called the church of Saint Sauveur.

The priest then left in his turn, promising to return again in the evening. George remained alone.

What passed then in the mind of the young man no one could know. Perhaps Nature, that unpitied creditor, resumed her rights; perhaps he was now as weak as he had before been strong; perhaps the curtain once fallen between the public and the actor, all this apparent calmness disappeared to give place to real agony.

George dined as usual. Then he directed the turnkey to have a bath prepared for the following morning at six o'clock, and to awake him at half-past five.

At nine o'clock the priest returned, and remained with George until eleven. During these two hours George was almost the sole spokesman, explaining to the priest how he comprehended God, and developing his theories upon the immortality of the soul. In the ordinary intercourse of life George was eloquent; during this last evening he was fervent and impassioned.

At eleven o'clock George reminded the priest that the hour for retiring had arrived, observing that in order to have all his strength for the following day, he had need of some repose. At the moment when the old man was leaving the room, a violent conflict seemed

to take place in George's breast. He recalled the priest; the old man returned, but George made an effort over himself. "Nothing," said he, "father, nothing."

George told a falsehood; it was still the name of Sara which struggled to escape his lips. But this time again the old priest left him without having heard it.

On the following morning at half-past five o'clock, when the turnkey entered his prisoner's room, he found him in a deep sleep.

"It was then true," said George, as he awoke, "a condemned prisoner can sleep during his last night."

They brought in the bath. At this moment the doctor entered.

"You see, doctor," said he, "that I rule myself by antiquity; the Athenians always took a bath before proceeding to the combat."

"How do you feel yourself this morning?" asked the latter, addressing his patient with one of those empty phrases, made use of when one knows not what else to say.

"Why, very well, doctor," replied George, with a smile; "I begin to think that I shall not die of my wound after all." He then took his sealed will, and placed it in the doctor's hands. "Doctor," added he, "I have named you my testamentary executor. You will find in this sheet of paper three lines which concern yourself. I was desirous of leaving you a remembrance of me."

The doctor brushed aside a tear, and murmured some words of thanks. George placed himself in the bath.

After a short interval the turnkey entered, and announced to the condemned that it was six o'clock.

"My dear doctor," said George, "will you permit me to leave the bath? Do not go away however; I shall be glad to shake hands with you before I leave the prison." The doctor retired.

George, now left alone, got out of the bath, dressed himself carefully, and arranged his hair and moustache. Having completed his toilet, he knocked at the door to indicate that he was ready. The priest entered. Never

had the young man appeared so handsome: his eyes shot flames, his brow seemed radiant.

"Oh, my son! my son!" said the priest, "beware of pride; pride has destroyed your body, take care lest it destroy your soul."

"You will pray for me, father," said George.

At that moment George perceived the executioner standing in the shadow of the door.

"Ah! is that you, my friend," said he, "approach."

The negro was enveloped in a large mantle under which was hidden his axe.

"Does your axe cut well?" demanded George.

"Yes," replied the executioner, "be easy on that score."

"It is well!" said the condemned.

He then perceived that the negro searched upon his hand for the diamond ring promised to him the evening before, the stone of which had been accidentally turned inwards. "Be easy in your turn," said he, shifting round the brilliant on his finger, "you shall have your ring."

He then proceeded towards a little secretaire, opened it, and took from it two letters. These were the letters he had written, the one to his father, the other to his brother. He handed them to the priest.

Once again George seemed as though he had something to communicate to him, for he placed his hand on the old man's shoulder, gazed at him fixedly, and moved his lips as if about to speak; but this time again his will was stronger than his emotion, and the name which struggled to escape his breast, died away on his lips.

At this moment six o'clock struck.

"Come," said George; and he left his room, followed by the priest and the executioner. At the foot of the staircase he found the doctor, who was waiting to bid him a last farewell. George held out his hand to him, and leaning over, whispered in his ear, "I recommend my body to you."

So saying he passed into the court-yard.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CHURCH OF SAINT SAUVEUR.

THE exterior gate of the prison was, as may be supposed, thronged with spectators. Such spectacles are rare at Port Louis, and every one wished to see, if not the death of the prisoner, at least the procession to the scaffold. The governor of the prison had requested to know George's wishes as to the manner in which he desired to be conducted to the scaffold. George had replied that it was his wish to proceed on foot, and he had obtained this favour. It was a last act of kindness on the part of the governor. Eight horse artillerymen waited at the gate. Along the streets through which he was to pass, the military were drawn up on each side, at the same time guarding the prisoner and restraining the populace. When he made his appearance a vast hum of many voices was heard. Contrary however to George's expectation, in the murmur which greeted his appearance, the accent of hatred was not the predominating sound. Every expression was to be heard, but particularly those of interest and pity.

There is always a powerful fascination in the aspect of a proud and handsome man face to face with death. George marched with firm and haughty tread, his head high and his countenance calm; but in his heart grief and despair were busy. He thought of Sara;—of Sara who had not endeavoured to see him, who had not written him a single line, who had not given him one single pledge of recollection or love;—of Sara in whom he had trusted, and in whom he now found he had been deceived. It is true, that with the love of Sara he might have regretted life; her forgetfulness formed the dregs in his cup.

And then side by side with his betrayed love, murmured his deceived pride, his futile ambition. He had failed then in all his attempts—his superiority to the common herd had availed him nothing: the result of this long struggle was the scaffold, whither he marched,

abandoned by all. When people would mention his name, it would only be to pronounce him a madman.

And yet he hoped at the corner of every street to behold her; he sought her at every window. She who had let fall her bouquet before him, when, mounted on his faithful Bayard, he proceeded a conqueror to triumph, let not a tear fall upon his path when, vanquished, he walked to the scaffold. But nowhere could he perceive a trace of her.

He proceeded thus along the entire length of the Rue de Paris. Then turning to the right, he advanced towards the Church of Saint Sauveur. The little church was hung with black as for a funeral. It was indeed not far removed from one; for what is a condemned prisoner on his way to the scaffold, but a living corpse? On approaching the doors George started. By the side of the good old priest who awaited him under the portico, stood a female, dressed in black and covered from head to foot with a long black veil. This woman in widow's garb, what did she there?—for whom did she wait? Despite himself, George quickened his pace. His eyes were fixed upon this figure, nor could he remove them from it. Then as he approached, his heart beat audibly; his pulse, so strong in the presence of death, became feverish before this woman. At the moment when he placed his foot upon the first step which led up to the portico, she advanced to meet him. George sprang up the little flight of steps, raised the veil, uttered a loud cry, and fell upon his knees. It was Sara.

Sara extended her arm with a slow and solemn movement. There was a dead silence throughout the vast assembly. "Listen to me," she said. "Upon the threshold of this church which he is about to enter, upon the threshold of that tomb in which he is about to rest, in the face of God and man, I take you all to witness that I, Sara de Malmédie, now ask M. George Munier if he is willing to take me for his wife."

"Sara," cried George, bursting into tears, "you are the best, the most generous, the noblest of women."

Then drawing himself up to his full height, and folding her in his arms as though he feared to lose her: "Come, my widow," said he, and he drew her with him into the church.

A body of twenty soldiers formed a lane on each side, whilst four soldiers guarded the choir. George passed between the ranks without seeing them, and knelt with Sara before the altar.

The priest commenced the nuptial mass; but George heard not the words he uttered. He held the hand of Sara clasped within his own, and as he felt it tremble at his touch, he gazed upon her sweet pale face and almost lifeless form, with looks filled with gratitude and love, stifling in his own bosom a rising sigh, for he thought what a heaven would have been a whole life passed with such a woman.

Meanwhile, the mass had proceeded for some time, when George, turning round, perceived Miko-Miko making every effort in his power, not by words, but by actions, to pass through the ranks of the soldiers who guarded the choir, and reach his patron's side. It was a last act of devotion which now came to demand as recompense a glance of the eye and a kindly pressure of the hand. George addressed himself in English to the officer in command, and asked permission for the good Chinese to enter. There could be no difficulty in granting this favour to the condemned; consequently upon a sign from the officer, the soldiers drew aside, and Miko-Miko passed into the choir.

We have seen what gratitude the poor merchant had vowed for George from the first day he beheld him. This gratitude had led him to seek George when a prisoner at the guard-house; it now manifested itself for the last time at the foot of the scaffold. He threw himself upon his knees before George, who held out his hand. Mike-Miko took his hand within his own and raised it to his lips; but at the same moment George felt that the Chinese glided into his hand a little note. George started. Immediately, as if the Chinese had demanded but this last favour, and, satisfied at having

obtained it, sought nothing further, he arose, and without uttering a single word left the choir.

George held the slip of paper in his hand, and his brow contracted. What could this note mean? Doubtless it was a communication of vast importance; but George dared not look at it.

From time to time on seeing Sara so beautiful, so devoted, so completely removed from all terrestrial love, a feeling of inexpressible anguish seized upon George's heart and crushed it as within a grasp of iron. It was then that, thinking of the happiness he had lost, he felt himself again attached to life; and while his soul seemed preparing to wing its flight, he felt his heart chained to earth. Then with a feeling almost amounting to despair, he reflected upon the terrors of the death that awaited him. Then again this slip of paper which burned within his hand—this communication which he dared not read for fear of being observed by the soldiers who guarded him—this note might contain a hope—though in the situation in which he was placed all hope was madness. Although burning with impatience to read this communication, he did not, thanks to that control which he ever exercised over himself, permit this feeling to betray itself by any external sign, only his contracted fingers pressed the note with such force that the nails entered the flesh.

Sara was still on her knees and seemed wrapped in prayer. They had now come to the raising of the Host. The priest lifted it aloft, the attending chorister sounded his bell, and every one fell upon his knees. George profited by this moment, and kneeling also, he opened his hand. The slip of paper contained only this single line:

"We are here; be prepared."

At the same instant, and as George, astonished and alone in the midst of the crowd, raised his head and gazed around him, the door of the sacristy was suddenly thrown open, eight sailors sprang into the church, seized the four soldiers in the choir, and pointed a *poignard* towards the breast of each. Jacques and Pierre

rushed forward, and, Jacques bearing Sara in his arms, and Pierre Munier dragging his son by the hand, the bride and bridegroom found themselves in the sacristy. The eight sailors retreated thither in their turn, forming a rampart of the four English soldiers whom they held up to the blows of their comrades. Jacques and Pierre closed the door. Another door opened towards the country, and at this entrance two horses were standing ready saddled; they were Bayard and Saladin.

"To horse!" cried Jacques, "to horse both of you, and fly with the speed of lightning to the Bay of the Tombs."

"But you, brother!" exclaimed George.

"Let them come and take us in the midst of my brave sailors," said Jacques, placing Sara upon her saddle, while Pierre Munier forced his son to mount; then raising his voice, he shouted:

"Calypsos, ahoy! Forward there, you sea-dogs!"

At the same instant, a hundred and twenty swarthy forms, armed to the teeth, emerged from the forest which skirted the base of Long Mountain and rushed towards them.

"Fly," said Jacques to Sara; "save him."

"But you," said Sara.

"We will follow, rest assured."

"George," exclaimed Sara, "in the name of Heaven come!" and the young girl started off at full gallop.

"My father!" cried George, "my father!"

"I thrice answer for his safety with my life," replied Jacques, striking Bayard with the flat of his sabre.

Bayard flew like the wind, bearing his rider, who in less than ten seconds disappeared along with Sara behind the Malabar camp, whilst Pierre Munier, Jacques, and his sailors followed with such rapidity that before the English had recovered from their astonishment, the little troop was already on the other side of the rivulet of the Pucelles, and entirely out of the reach of musket-shot.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LEICESTER.

ABOUT five o'clock in the evening of the day on which the events we have related in the foregoing chapter occurred, the brigantine Calypso was standing away under all sail towards the north-east, hugging the wind, which as usual in these latitudes blew from the east. Besides her trusty mariners and their first-lieutenant, master Iron-Head, with whom our readers are already acquainted if not personally at least by reputation, the crew of the Calypso was augmented by three other personages, viz. Pierre Munier, George, and Sara. Pierre Munier was pacing up and down the waist of the vessel with Jacques. Close to the stern, George and Sara were seated side by side, Sara's hand clasped in his. George's looks were fixed on Sara, and Sara's on the heavens.

It would require one to have been placed in the dreadful situation from which the two lovers had escaped, to appreciate the sensation of supreme happiness which they experienced on finding themselves free—free upon that immense ocean which bore them away far from their native country it is true, but also far from a country which, like a wicked step-mother, only noticed them from time to time in order to persecute them. At intervals however a painful sigh would break from the lips of one and make the other tremble; the long tortured heart dares not all at once resume confidence in its happiness. Nevertheless they were free; they had above their heads the open vault of heaven, and beneath them the deep blue sea, and they fled with all the speed of their gallant bark far from that Isle of France which had so nearly proved fatal to them.

Pierre and Jacques conversed together, but George and Sara uttered not a word; sometimes one would murmur the other's name, but that was all. From time to time Pierre Munier would pause in his walk

and gaze on them with an air of indescribable rapture; the poor old man had suffered so much that he knew not how he had strength to support his happiness. Jacques, less sentimental, looked in the same direction, but it was evident that it was not the picture we have described which attracted his regards. His eyes were levelled over the heads of George and Sara, and seemed as though they would pierce into space in the direction of Port Louis. Jacques evidently did not share in the general joy; there were even moments when he became thoughtful and serious, and would pass his hand across his brow as if to chase away a cloud.

As to Iron-Head, he conversed quietly, seated near the steersman. The worthy Breton would have broken the head of the first sailor who should for an instant have hesitated to perform an order given by him; but with the exception of this very commendable strictness in matters of duty, he was by no means proud, and would give his hand to every one and speak to the first comer.

All the rest of the crew had resumed that careless aspect, which after an engagement or a storm becomes the habitual expression of a sailor's physiognomy. The watch were on deck, the others pursued their several avocations below.

Pierre Munier, absorbed as he was in the happiness of George and Sara, had not failed to remark the uneasiness of Jacques. More than once he had followed the latter's gaze, and as he had not been able to observe anything in the direction in which his son's eyes were fixed, save a few heavy clouds piled up around the setting sun, he fancied that these clouds were the cause of Jacques's uneasiness.

"Are we threatened with a storm?" inquired he, at the moment when the latter had cast towards the horizon one of those interrogatory glances of which we have spoken.

"With a storm!" said Jacques. "Ah! faith if it were but a question of a storm only, the Calypso would care no more for it than that gull yonder; but we are threatened with something worse than that."

"And with what are we threatened," asked Pierre Munier, uneasily. "I had imagined that the moment we placed our feet upon your deck we were saved."

"Why," replied Jacques, "the fact is we have a better chance now than we had twelve hours ago, when we were hidden in the woods of the Little Mountain, and when George was repeating his *confiteor* in the church of Saint Sauveur; but still without wishing to make you uneasy, father, I cannot say that our heads are very firmly fixed upon our shoulders yet." Then without addressing himself to any one in particular, "Jump up aloft there to the mast-head," he added.

Three sailors darted upwards. In a few seconds one of them reached the required position; the two others descended again to the deck.

"And what do you fear then, Jacques?" resumed the old man; "do you think that they will attempt to pursue us?"

"Precisely so, father," replied Jacques; "this time you have hit the right nail on the head. They have yonder in Port Louis a certain frigate called the Leices-ter, an old acquaintance of mine; and I confess to you that I am afraid they will not let us off so quietly without proposing a little game of bowls which we shall be obliged to accept."

"But it seems to me," rejoined Pierre Munier, "that we have at all events from twenty-five to thirty miles start of them, and that at the speed at which we are going, we shall soon be out of sight of the island altogether."

"Heave the log," said Jacques.

In an instant three sailors were occupied in this duty, while Jacques watched their proceedings with visible interest. Then when it was terminated:

"How many knots?" inquired he.

"Ten knots, sir," replied the mate of the watch.

"Certainly that's pretty well for a brigantine close-hauled, and there is not perhaps in the entire British navy, a frigate except one which could accomplish a quarter of a knot more in the hour; but unfortunately this

frigate is precisely the one with which we shall have to do, in case the governor takes it into his head to pursue us."

"Oh! if it depends on the governor alone, they certainly will not pursue us," replied Pierre Munier; "you know well that the governor was your brother's intimate friend."

"I am perfectly aware of it. But that did not prevent him from condemning him to death."

"Could he do otherwise without failing in his duty?"

"This time, father, it is not his duty alone which is in question; his self-love also is at stake. Doubtless, if the governor could have done so, he would most certainly have pardoned George, for in so doing he would have given proofs of his superiority; but George has escaped from his hands, and at the very moment when he imagined that he held him most secure. In this affair therefore, the superiority has been on George's side; and the governor will naturally wish to be revenged."

"Sail, ho!" cried the look-out from the mast-head.

"Ah!" ejaculated Jacques, nodding slightly to his father, as much as to say "I thought so." "And where away?" continued he, raising his eyes aloft.

"Down to leeward," replied the sailor.

"How far off?" demanded Jacques.

"About off the Isle aux Tonneliers."

"And bound from where, would you say?"

"To all appearance from Port Louis."

"That's our affair," murmured Jacques, looking at his father. "I told you we were not yet out of his clutches."

"What is the matter?" asked Sara.

"Nothing," replied George; "it would appear that we are pursued, that's all."

"O Heavens!" cried Sara, "surely Providence has not thus miraculously preserved him only to give him up once more to his enemies!"

During this time, Jacques had taken his glass and ascended into the main top. He gazed earnestly for some time in the direction indicated by the look-out; then forcing back, one after the other, the tubes of the in-

strument with the palm of his hand, he came down, whistling, and took his place again at his father's side.

"Well?" inquired the old man.

"Well," replied Jacques, "I was not deceived; our good friends the English are after us. Fortunately," he added, looking at his watch, "it will be night in a couple of hours more, and the moon does not rise until half-past twelve."

"Then you think that we shall be able to escape them?"

"We will do our best, father, you may depend on it. Oh! I am not by any means proud. I do not like affairs where there is nothing to be gained but blows; and in this particular case, deuce take me if I shall change my opinion."

"How, Jacques," exclaimed George, "would you fly before the enemy?—you, the intrepid!—you, the unconquered!"

"My dear fellow, I will always fly before the devil, when he has empty pockets and two inches more horns than I have myself. Oh! when he has full pockets, that is a different affair altogether. Under those circumstances I would risk something."

"But do you know, they will say that you are afraid?"

"And I will reply that it is perfectly true. After all, what can be the use of fighting with these fellows? If they take us, our business is settled, and they will hang us up to the yard-arm, one after the other, without farther ceremony. If, on the contrary, we take them, we shall be obliged to sink them and their ship together."

"How!—sink them?"

"Without doubt. What would you have us do with them? If they were negroes one might sell them; but whites,—what are they good for?"

"Oh, Jacques, my dear brother! you would surely never act thus?"

"Sara, my little sister," said Jacques, "we must do what we can. When the moment comes, if the moment does come, we will place you in a charming little spot, where you will be unable to see anything at all of what

is going on. Consequently, it will be the same to you as if nothing had passed."

Then turning in the direction of the pursuing ship, he cried: "Yes, yes, there she is, sure enough. We can see her topsails just rising; do you see? Look there, father!"

"I see nothing but a white point balancing itself upon a wave, which to my eye has all the appearance of a sea-gull."

"Well, that is she. Your sea-gull is neither more nor less than a fine slashing thirty-six gun frigate. But you know a frigate is still a bird, only it happens to be an eagle instead of a sea-mew."

"But might not this be some other vessel,—a merchant ship for example?"

"A merchant ship would not be lying close-hauled."

"But we are close-hauled, are we not?"

"Oh! that is quite another affair. We dare not pass Port Louis; it would be like casting ourselves into the lion's mouth at once. We have accordingly been compelled to steer a different course."

"Can you not increase the speed of the brigantine?"

"She has got quite as much sail on her now, father, as she can well carry. By-and-by, when we get the wind more aft, we will show a little more canvas, and by that means gain about two knots; but then the frigate will do as much, and so it will come to the same thing in the end. The Leicester must gain upon us; I know her of old."

"In that case she will come up with us in the course of to-morrow?"

"Yes, if we do not manage to escape her during the night."

"And do you think we shall be able to escape her?"

"That depends upon who commands on board her."

"But suppose they overtake us?"

"Well then, father, it will be a boarding affair; for, you must understand a game at long bowls would not suit us. First of all, the Leicester, if it is she—and she *is*, I would wager a hundred negroes to ten—has some-

where about twelve guns more than ourselves. Besides, she has Bourbon, the Isle of France, and Rodrigue under her lee, where she can run in and repair damages. We have only the sea,—the unmeasurable expanse of ocean. All lands are unfriendly to us. We therefore stand in need above all things of our wings.”

“And in case of boarding?”

“Then the chances are more equal. In the first place, we have got howitzers, which do not generally form part of the regular armament of a man-of-war, but which we privateers authorize ourselves to carry. In the second place, as the frigate is on the peace establishment, she has not in all probability a crew of more than two hundred and seventy men, whilst we have two hundred and sixty, which, as you may see, especially with such rascals as I have got, places matters nearly on an equality. So make yourself easy, father. Ha! there sounds the gong; you must not let this little affair take away your appetite for supper.”

George then took Sara’s arm, Pierre Munier followed, and all three descended into Jacques’s cabin, transformed, in honour of Sara’s presence, into the grand saloon.

Jacques himself lingered for an instant behind, in order to give some directions to master Iron-Head, his first lieutenant.

The interior of the Calypso, even for the eye of a sailor, was something curious to behold. As a lover embellishes his mistress by all the means in his power, Jacques had decked out his brigantine in the choicest attire which could grace a sea-nymph. The mahogany staircases were as bright as glass, the copper ornaments, polished three times a day, shone like gold; and the instruments of carnage, axes, cutlasses, and muskets, disposed in fantastic designs around the ports through which the guns protruded their bronzed muzzles, seemed like so many ornaments disposed by a skilful decorator in the atelier of some popular artist.

But it was more especially the captain’s cabin which was remarkable for its luxury. Master Jacques was, as we have said before, a very sensual personage; and

although, under extreme circumstances, he could very well dispense with luxuries, he was sufficiently fond, on ordinary occasions, of enjoying them to the uttermost. Consequently Jacques's cabin, destined to serve at the same time as saloon, bed-chamber, and boudoir, was a model of neatness and elegance.

In the first place, on either side, that is to say on the starboard and larboard, stood two wide couches, under which were concealed two pieces of cannon mounted on carriages which could only be perceived from without. One of these two ottomans served as a bed, the other as a sofa. Between the two windows was placed a beautiful Venetian glass, with its antique and massive gold frame, on which were represented figures of Cupids intermingled with flowers and fruits; and from the ceiling hung a silver lamp of precious workmanship, taken doubtless from the altar of some Madonna.

The ottomans and even the bulkheads of the cabin were covered with magnificent Indian damask, on the scarlet ground of which were embroidered those beautiful golden flowers which seem as if they were the product of some fairy needle. This cabin had been gallantly ceded by Jacques to Sara, and it was here, as we have said, that the repast was served.

It was indeed a strange sensation of happiness which these four individuals experienced, on finding themselves thus re-united round the same table, after having been so nearly separated for ever. Occupied only with each other to the exclusion of all the world, the moments flew past, and they had been an hour at table before they could believe that half that time had elapsed.

The first glances of the little party, on again ascending to the deck, were naturally turned towards the direction in which they had last seen the frigate. There was a moment of silence.

"Why," said Pierre Munier at last, "it seems to me that the frigate has disappeared."

"That is to say, that as the sun is on the horizon, her sails are in shadow," replied Jacques; "but look

in that direction, father." And the young sailor extended his hand to direct the old man's gaze.

"Yes, yes!" said Pierre, "I see her now!"

"She is even nearer us," observed George.

"Yes, somewhere about a mile or two. Stay a moment; now look, George, and you will be able to see her lower sails; she is scarcely more than twelve miles from us."

The Calypso was at this moment off the pass of the Cape, and was fast leaving the island in the distance; the sun was sinking behind a mass of clouds on the horizon, and the night was advancing with that rapidity peculiar to the tropics. Jacques made a sign to master Iron-Head, who approached hat in hand.

"Well, master Iron-Head," commenced Jacques, "what is your opinion of yonder ship?"

"Why, begging your honour's pardon, you know more than I do on that subject, Captain."

"Never mind that, I want your opinion. Is she a merchant ship or a man-of-war?"

"You are joking, Captain," replied Iron-Head, grinning to the full extent of his huge mouth; "you know well that there is not in the entire merchant service, no, not even in the East India Company's service, a single merchant ship which could even keep up with us, and this one has gained upon us."

"Ah! and how much has she gained upon us since the time we first got sight of her, that is to say during these last three hours?"

"You know that as well as I do, Captain."

"I want your opinion, master Iron-Head; two heads are better than one."

"Well, Captain, I should say she has gained about three miles, or thereabouts."

"Very good, and what is she, in your opinion?"

"You have made her out, Captain."

"Perhaps; but I may be deceived."

"Impossible!" said Iron-Head, and again he grinned.

"Never mind—out with it."

"Why it's the Leicester, to be sure."

"And who do you think she is after?"

"Why, the Calypso, as it seems to me. You know right well, Captain, that she has a bone to pick with us, for something like a mizen-mast that we had the insolence to cut in two."

"Quite right, master Iron-Head; I was aware of all you have just told me, but I am not sorry to find that you are of my opinion. In five minutes the watch will be called; let the rest of the crew turn in. In about twenty hours they will require all their strength."

"But, Captain, don't you intend to profit by the night to double upon her?" demanded master Iron-Head.

"Silence, sir; we will talk about that bye-and-bye," replied Jacques; "go to your duty, and have the orders I have given you executed."

Five minutes afterwards the watch was called, the hammocks piped down, and all the men not required on deck disappeared. In the course of ten minutes all the crew slept or at least seemed to sleep. And yet among all these men, there was not one who did not well know that the Calypso was pursued; but they also knew their commander, and reposed entire confidence in him.

Meanwhile the brigantine continued the same course, but she now began to meet the long sea swell, which rendered her motion far from easy. Sara, George, and Pierre Munier descended into the cabin, and Jacques remained alone upon deck.

The night had now completely set in, and they had entirely lost sight of the frigate. In about half an hour, Jacques again summoned his second in command.

"Master Iron-Head," said Jacques, "where do you suppose that we are now?"

"To the north of the Coin de Mire," replied the lieutenant.

"Perfectly right. Now do you think that you would be able to steer the brigantine between the Coin de Mire and the Isle Plate, without running aground on either side."

"I would steer her with my eyes shut, captain."

"Very good. In that case get all ready to put the ship about, as we have no time to lose."

Every man ran to his station, and there was a moment of silence and expectation. Then amid the general silence a clear manly voice was heard:

"Ready about!" shouted Jacques.

"All ready, sir," answered master Iron-Head.

"Down with the helm!" said Jacques.

The steersmen obeyed; the brigantine hesitated for an instant, like a horse suddenly pulled up from a hard gallop; then she slowly came round, bending under the influence of a fresh breeze and dashing clouds of spray before her sharp and graceful bows.

"Helm's a-lee!"

The brigantine came up into the wind and began to pay off.

"Raise tacks and sheets!" continued Jacques, "mainsail haul!"

These two manœuvres were executed with the same precision and rapidity as the former ones; the brigantine came about, her large mainsail filled, the forward sails were speedily re-adjusted in their turn, and the graceful vessel began plunging forward in her intended course.

"And now, master Iron-Head," said Jacques, after having watched all the movements of the brigantine with the same degree of satisfaction as a rider would have done those of a favourite horse; "you must double the isle, profit by each variation of the breeze to get as close as possible into the wind's eye, and by making a long arm skirt the entire reef of rocks which stretches from the *Passe des Cornes* to the *Crique de Flac*."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the second in command.

"And now good night, master," continued Jacques; "you will call me when the moon rises."

And Jacques in his turn proceeded to his berth, with that happy indifference which seems one of the privileges of those whose existences are constantly suspended betwixt life and death. Ten minutes afterwards, he slept as soundly as the meanest of his sailors.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE COMBAT.

MASTER Iron-Head kept his word: he passed safely through the channel formed by the sea between the Coin de Mire and the Isle Plate, and having doubled the Passe des Cornes and the Isle d'Ambré, he drew in as closely as possible to the coast. Then about half-past twelve, as the moon began to rise to the south of the Isle Rodrigue, he proceeded according to his orders to awake his commander.

Jacques on ascending to the deck directed towards all points of the horizon that rapid inquiring glance peculiar to seamen. The wind had freshened during the night, and had varied from east to north-east; the land lay about nine miles off on the starboard side, looking like a bank of mist; not a sail was visible in any direction.

They were now off Port Bourbon.

Jacques had played the best game that under the circumstances was practicable. Supposing the frigate, which had been lost sight of during the night, should continue her course to the east, it would be too late for her at day-break to retrace her steps, and in that case he was saved. If, on the contrary, by some fatal inspiration, the captain of the pursuing ship might have divined his manœuvre and followed it, he had still the chance left of remaining unperceived by skirting the coast, and profiting by the irregularities of the island to get clear away from his enemy. Whilst Jacques, with the assistance of a night-glass, endeavoured to pierce the gloom which still hung over the horizon, he felt some one touch him lightly on the shoulder. He turned round: it was George.

"Ah! is that you, brother?" said he, holding out his hand.

"Well," inquired George, "any thing new?"

"Nothing at present; but even should the Leicester be astern of us, we should not be able to make her out

on account of the darkness. At day-break we shall know all!—Ah! ha!”

“What is it?”

“Nothing; a little slant of wind, that’s all.”

“In our favour?”

“Yes, if the frigate has continued her course; if the contrary, this variation is as good for her as it is for ourselves. At all events we must take advantage of it.” Then turning towards the mate who had relieved the second in command: “See all clear to set stu’n-sails,” cried he.

“Out stu’n-sails!” repeated the mate.

At the same instant, from the deck to the topmasts and from thence to the top-gallant yards, the additional sheets of canvas flew aloft, like so many white and floating clouds, and were speedily fixed on the larboard side of the sails. Almost at the same moment the brigantine seemed to obey a more rapid impulse. George made an observation to that effect to his brother.

“Yes, yes,” said Jacques, “she is like Bayard; she has a fine mouth, and does not require flogging to make her go; you have but to give her sail in sufficient quantity, and she will walk along in good style.”

“And, at this rate, how many miles do you suppose we make in the hour?” asked George.

“Heave the log!” cried Jacques.

The manœuvre was immediately executed.

“Eleven knots, sir.”

“That is just two knots more than we made just now. We cannot expect more from wood, canvas, and iron; and if we had any other ship after us instead of that demon of a Leicester, I should like nothing better than just to lead her a dance as far as the Cape of Good Hope, and once there, why we should bid her good night, and leave her to her own devices.

George made no reply, and the two brothers continued to pace the deck in silence, only each time that Jacques returned aft, his eyes seemed as though they would pierce the darkness which enveloped them. At last he stopped altogether, and in place of con-

tinuing his walk he leant over the break of the poop. In fact the shades of night began to disperse, although the first streaks of daylight had hardly yet commenced to appear, and in this faint dawn Jacques fancied he could distinguish, at the distance of about twelve miles, the form of the frigate steering the same course as the brigantine.

At this moment, and as he was in the act of extending his hand in order to point out this almost imperceptible object to his brother, the look-out on the mast-head sung out:

"A sail astern!"

"Aye, aye," said Jacques, as if speaking to himself, "I see her. Yes, they have followed on our track as if it had been left in the water behind us. Only instead of passing between the Isle Plate and the Coin de Mire, they have passed between the Isle Plate and the Isle Ronde, by which they have lost two hours. They must have on board that craft a seaman who knows his trade well."

"Why, I see nothing," said George.

"Stay!—look! there—there!" replied Jacques; "you can see down to her lower sails, and when she rises on a wave, you can see her copper glancing in the light."

"Yes," said George, "you are right; I see it."

"And what do you see, George?" asked a gentle voice behind the young man.

George turned round and perceived Sara.

"What do I see, Sara? A very beautiful sight, that of the rising sun; but as there is no perfectly pure enjoyment in this world, this spectacle is in some degree marred by the aspect of that ship, which, as you see, despite the hopes and calculations of my brother, has not lost our track."

"George," said Sara, "God, who has so miraculously preserved us up to the present, will not turn away his eyes from us at the very moment when we stand most in need of his protecting arm. Let not this sight prevent you from adoring him in his works. See, see! George, *how beautiful a sight!*"

In fact, at the moment when day was about to break, one might have imagined that jealous night endeavoured to thicken her shadows. These in their turn gave way to a blueish and transparent light which overspread the scene, gradually expanding and deepening from silvery white to pale rose-colour, and from that to a deep crimson. At length a cloud of purple, like the heated vapour of a volcano, rose on the horizon. It was the king of the world coming on take possession of his empire; it was the royal sun which now ascended into his firmament!

It was the first time that Sara had ever beheld such a sight. She remained for a length of time in an ecstasy of admiration, pressing, with a love full of faith and piety, the young man's hand; but George who had had time during many a long sea voyage to habituate himself to this spectacle, was the first to withdraw his gaze and fix it anew upon the object of general attention. The pursuing ship still approached, only it became less distinctly visible, bathed as it was in the floods of eastern light. And it was the brigantine, on the contrary, which now became in its turn perfectly distinct to the frigate.

"So, so," murmured Jacques, "he has seen us also, for there go his stu'n'sails. George, my boy," continued Jacques, "leaning over towards his brother's ear, you know women, and you are aware that it costs them some pains to muster up their resolution; you would do well, in my opinion, to give Sara a hint of what is about to take place."

"What does your brother say?" inquired Sara.

"He doubts your courage," replied George, "and I was answering to him for it."

"And you were right, dear George. When the moment comes, you must tell me what I am to do, and I will obey."

"That infernal craft goes along as if she had wings," continued Jacques. "Dear sister-in-law, did you ever happen to hear at Port Louis the name of the commander of this ship?"

"I have several times seen him at my uncle, M. de Malmedie's, and I perfectly recollect his name. He is called George Patterson; but I do not think that it is he who now commands the Leicester, for the day before yesterday I recollect hearing that he was ill, and as they said, dangerously so."

"Well, they will do a gross act of injustice to his lieutenant, if on his superior's death they do not appoint him captain in his room. But so much the better; there is some pleasure in having to do with a fellow like this. See how he handles his ship! By Jove she comes on like a race-horse. If that pace last five or six hours more, we shall have a set-to."

"Well, we will engage him," said Pierre Munier, who that moment had come on deck, and whose eyes shone at the approach of danger with that ardour which, on every trying occasion, filled his soul.

"Ah! is that you, father?" said Jacques; "I am delighted to see you in such a mood; for in a few hours, as I have said, we shall need every arm on board."

Sara turned slightly pale, and George felt that the young girl pressed his hand. He turned towards her, smiling:

"Well, Sara," said he, "after having had so much confidence in the Almighty, do you begin to doubt him now?"

"No, George, no," replied Sara; "and when from the depths of the ship I shall hear the roaring of the cannon, the whistling of the bullets, and the groans of the wounded, I shall be still full of faith and hope, and certain of again beholding my George safe and unharmed; for something tells me that we have drained the bitterest portion of our cup of unhappiness, and just as the shadows of night have given place to this brilliant sun, so will our night vanish before the glories of a coming day."

"Bravo!" cried Jacques; "that's what I call speaking. Upon my soul, I don't see why we shouldn't range up alongside this saucy frigate, and spare him half his trouble, and us half our anxiety. What say you, George? Should you like to try the experiment?"

"Willingly," said George; "but do you not fear that at this distance, supposing there was a British ship lying in Port Bourbon, she might hear the cannonading and come out to lend a helping hand to her companion?"

"By my faith! you speak like St. John of the Golden Mouth, brother," said Jacques, "and we will continue our course. Ah! is that you, master Iron-Head," continued he, addressing his lieutenant who at that moment appeared on deck; "you come in the very nick of time. Here we are, as you see, off Morne Brabant; steer west-sou'-west, and in the meantime we will go down to breakfast. It is a good precaution to take at all times, but especially so when one is uncertain whether he will ever dine or not."

So saying, Jacques offered his arm to Sara, and leading the way, descended the cabin stairs first, and was followed by Pierre and George.

Doubtless with the intention of distracting his guests for a few moments, at least, from the danger which threatened them, Jacques prolonged the breakfast as much as possible. Nearly two hours had therefore elapsed, when they again made their appearance on deck.

Jacques's first glance was toward the Leicester. She had visibly lessened her distance, and now showed her long and formidable range of guns; and yet Jacques appeared to have expected to find himself at even a less distance from his pursuer, for casting his eyes aloft to assure himself that no alteration had been made in the sails, he summoned his lieutenant.

"Why, how is this, master Iron-Head?" said he. "It seems to me that we are making more way now than we were two hours ago."

"Why, yes, Captain," said the second in command; "for the matter of that, your honour is right enough."

"What have you been doing to the craft, then?"

"Oh, mere trifles. I have changed our trim a bit, and ordered the men forward."

"Yes, yes, you are a skilful seaman; and pray what have you gained by that?"

"A knot, Captain—one poor knot; that's all. We are going twelve in the hour; I have just hove the log. But that will not serve us much, for doubtless they have done as much on their side. During the last quarter of an hour the speed of the frigate has very much increased. Look, sir! you can see her hull. Oh! we have to do with some old sea-wolf who will plague us before we have done with him. It puts me very much in mind of the way that same Leicester chased us when Lord William Murray commanded her."

"Ah! what was I thinking of! All is explained now," cried Jacques. "A thousand Louis to a hundred, George, that it is your mad governor who is on board this ship. He has been anxious to take his revenge."

"Do you think so, Jacques?" cried George, rising hastily from the bench on which he was seated, and grasping his brother's arm earnestly; "do you really think so? I confess that I should be glad of it, for I also have an injury to revenge."

"It is himself in person; I am certain of it now. There is not a bloodhound amongst them who could have followed us up as he has done. The devil! what an honour for a poor slaver like me to have an affair with a commodore in the Royal Navy and the governor of the Mauritius to boot. Many thanks, George. It is you who have brought me this piece of good fortune."

And Jacques, with a laugh, held out his hand to his brother.

But the probability of having an engagement with Lord William Murray himself, was for Jacques, placed in the critical situation in which he found himself, only another inducement to take all needful precautions. He therefore cast his eyes round the brigantine. The hammocks had been piped up and were now stowed away in their nettings. He examined the crew. The crew had already instinctively separated into detached groups, each collected round the gun they were to serve. All these signs indicated that it was unnecessary to give these men any directions, as every one knew as well as he did himself what was about to take place.

At this moment the sound of a drum on board the frigate was borne by a passing breeze to the ears of the little party on the deck of the brigantine.

"Ah, ha!" said Jacques. "They shall not accuse us of being behindhand. Come, my men, follow the example set us. The sailors of the Royal Navy are good instructors, and we cannot but gain by following their example;" then raising his voice, "Beat to quarters!" he cried.

Forthwith was heard below the roll of two drums and the piercing notes of a fife. In a short time the three musicians made their appearance upon deck through the main hatchway, marched round the ship, and disappeared through the fore hatchway. The effect was magical. In an instant all were at the posts designed for them beforehand, and armed with the light weapons which were appropriated to their use. The topmen ascended to their posts with their rifles, the musketry was ranged in the waist, and upon the fore-castle the boarding pikes were mounted in their frames; the guns were unlashd and run out of their ports, and ample provision of grenades deposited in all spots from whence they could be thrown upon the enemy's deck. Lastly the boat-swain had the decks cleared, and the boarding planks hoisted up to their appointed places.

The bustle and activity were no less great below than upon deck. The powder magazine was opened, the safety lanterns lit, and the spare helm and spars disposed in their places; the bulkheads also were knocked down, the captain's cabin stripped of its furniture, and the two pieces of cannon which it contained, rolled aft, ready for service.

After this scene of bustling activity there was a dead silence. Jacques saw that all was ready and commenced his inspection.

Every man was at his station, and everything in its appointed place. Nevertheless, as Jacques felt convinced that the game he was now about to play would be one of the most serious in his life, the inspection lasted half an hour. During this inspection, he

examined everything, and spoke to every man. When he again came on deck, the frigate had visibly gained upon the brigantine, and the two vessels were now but a mile and a-half apart. Another half-hour elapsed, during which there were not certainly ten words exchanged on board the brigantine; all the faculties alike of the crew, their officers, and the passengers, seemed concentrated in their eyes.

All at once a slight puff of smoke issued from the bows of the frigate, and the British ensign flew aloft and floated majestically in the air.

The engagement now became inevitable, as the brigantine could no longer, even had she wished it, haul her wind; the superiority of sailing evinced by her adversary was manifest. Jacques then turned to Sara:

"Come, my dear sister," said he, "you see that every one is at his post; I think that it is time for you to descend to yours."

"O Heavens!" exclaimed the young girl, "is the battle then inevitable?"

"In a quarter of an hour more," replied Jacques, "the conversation will commence; and as according to all probability it will be a warm one, it is absolutely necessary that those who are not to take part in it should retire."

"Sara," said George, "do not forget what you have promised me."

"No, no," said the young girl, "I am ready to obey. You see, George, I am reasonable. But you ——"

"Sara, you would not ask me, I hope, to remain a passive spectator of what is about to take place, when it is for me alone that so many brave men are exposing their lives."

"Oh no," said Sara; "no, I ask you only to think of me, and to recollect that if you die I die also."

She then offered her hand to Jacques, presented her cheek to Pierre Munier, and conducted by George descended the cabin steps.

A quarter of an hour afterwards George again appeared on deck; he held a boarding cutlass in his hand

and had a pair of pistols in his belt. Pierre Munier was armed with his inlaid carabine, that old and well-tried friend which had already rendered him such faithful service. Jacques was on the weather side of the quarter-deck, holding in his hand a speaking-trumpet, the sign of command, and having at his feet a boarding-sabre and a little iron helmet.

The two hostile vessels continued the same course, the frigate pressing closely on the heels of the brigantine, and already so near that the sailors in the tops of each ship could see distinctly what was passing on the other's decks.

"Master Iron-Head," said Jacques, "you have good eyes and a sound judgment, do me the favour to mount into the fore-top and tell me what is passing on board the enemy."

The lieutenant sprang forward at this order like a simple topman, and in an instant was at the post indicated.

"Well?" said the captain.

"Well, Captain, all are at their quarters, and the gunners at the guns; the ship is cleared for action.

"Are there any troops on board besides the sailors and marines?"

"I think not, captain, unless they are stowed away between decks, for I see everywhere the same uniform."

"Well in that case the game is almost equal, at least within about fifteen or twenty men. That is all I want to know. Come down, master Iron-Head.

"One instant—one instant—the Englishman has raised his speaking-trumpet. If we keep silent we may catch what he says."

This last opinion was a rather hazardous one, for despite the silence which reigned on board, not a sound from the pursuing ship reached the ears of those on board the brigantine; but the order given by the captain was no less promptly explained to the whole of the crew, for at the same instant two jets of smoke issued from the bows of the frigate, the reports quickly followed, and two balls ricocheted along the water in the wake of the Calypso.

"Good," said Jacques, "they have only eighteen pound carronades like ourselves; the chances become more and more equal."

The two vessels continued their course almost for the space of half an hour more, without any fresh mark of hostility having manifested itself on board the frigate. On her side, as we have seen, the brigantine, judging doubtless that it was useless to throw away powder and ball, had remained insensible to the two provocations offered her by the enemy; but it became evident by the animated features of the crew, and by the attention with which the captain measured the distance which still separated the two ships, that the conversation, as Jacques called it, would not long be confined to a monologue, but that the dialogue would soon commence.

In fact after an interval of about ten minutes more, a period which appeared an age to all, the bows of the frigate again lighted up, a double report was heard, which was this time followed by the rushing sound of the balls as they flew through the rigging, passing in their course through the fore-topsail and cutting away a few ropes.

Jacques with rapid eye followed the effect of these two messengers of destruction; then seeing that they had done but slight damage:

"Come, men," said he, "it would appear that they want to provoke us. Let us return the compliment. Fire!"

At the same instant a double report shook the brigantine, and Jacques leaned forward over the side to watch the result of the fire. One of the two balls carried away a portion of the frigate's bulwarks, while the other buried itself in her side.

"Hallo!" cried Jacques, "what you are about there, you others? Give him a broadside—aim at the rigging—break his limbs and cut his wings for him; wood is more precious to him just now than men. Ha!"

At the same moment two balls passed through the sails and rigging of the brigantine, and whilst one grazed the main-yard, the other carried away the fore-royal mast.

"Fire now—dogs—fire!" cried Jacques, "and make an example of those rascals. Twenty-five Louis for the first mast that falls on board the frigate."

The roar of artillery followed the command almost instantly, and the passage of the balls could be traced through the rigging of the hostile ship.

During nearly a quarter of an hour the firing was kept up on both sides with equal ardour; the breeze, lulled by the firing, had almost entirely ceased, and the two vessels were scarcely running more than five or six knots. The entire space between the foes was filled with smoke, so that it was almost at hazard that the gunners fired. Meanwhile the frigate continued to advance, her top-masts alone peering through the wreaths of vapour which enveloped her, whilst the brigantine, who had the wind astern, and fired from her poop, was entirely out of the smoke.

This was the moment awaited by Jacques. He had, as he had said, done all in his power to avoid coming to close quarters, but compelled as it were to this course, he was now, like a wounded boar, going to turn upon his pursuer. The frigate was now upon the brigantine's starboard quarter, and began to use her forward guns, whilst the latter, on her side, now replied by those on her quarter. Jacques saw the advantage of his position and resolved to profit by it.

"The watch on deck!" cried he.

The boatswain's whistle replied to the order, and the watch was on deck in an instant.

Then whilst the firing continued, a voice was heard above the roar of the artillery, crying:

"Stand by to clew up the mainsail.—Man the larboard braces.—Stand by tacks and sheets!—Down with the helm!—Brace round the fore-yard!—Haul up the main tack!—Flat a-back with everything!—Steady, so!"

Scarcely were these successive orders executed, when the brigantine, obeying the simultaneous action of sails and helm, swung rapidly round to starboard, keeping enough way on her so as to cut off the course of the frigate, and remained hove to on the spot, thanks to the

precautions taken by her commander in hauling forward her starboard braces. At the same moment the frigate, deprived of all power of working, by the damages she had received in her after sails and rigging, and no longer able to clear the brigantine, came on surging through the sea and smoke, and against her will, ran a-board of her adversary, with a terrible shock, her bowsprit becoming entangled in the main shrouds of the brigantine. At this moment the voice of Jacques was heard once more above the din of combat.

"Fire!" cried he; "rake them fore and aft! Don't leave a spar standing in her!"

Fourteen pieces of cannon, six of which were charged with grape and canister, and eight with shells, obeyed this command, sweeping the frigate's deck, upon which they laid prostrate thirty or forty men, and the foremast snapped short off by the deck. At the same instant a shower of grenades from aloft, falling into the waist and channels, cleared the entire fore part of the frigate; whilst the latter could only reply to this cloud of fire and storm of balls from her mizen top, embarrassed by the wreck of its topsail. At this moment, from the yards of the brigantine—along the bowsprit of the frigate—by the shrouds, spars, ropes, and stays,—the boarders of the *Calypso* thronged forward and pressed on to the attack. Vainly did the British marines direct upon them a terrible fire of musketry. To those who fell, others succeeded. The wounded dragged themselves forward, casting before them their grenades, and waving their cutlasses in the air. George and Jacques believed themselves already conquerors, when at the cry, "All hands on deck," the British sailors, hitherto engaged below, rushed up through the main and fore hatchways. This reinforcement in some measure re-assured the marines who had begun to give way. The captain of the frigate put himself at the head of his men. Jacques was not mistaken: it was indeed the former captain of the *Leicester* who had once more assumed the command. George and Lord William Murray found themselves once more face to face, but this time amid blood and carnage, sabre in hand, and

mortal enemies. They recognised each other simultaneously, and endeavoured to meet; but the confusion was so great that they were swept on as by a whirlwind.

The two brothers pressed the foremost on the British ranks, fighting side by side with equal coolness, strength, and courage. Two British sailors raised their axes above George's head: both fell to the deck stricken by invisible bullets. Twice did the marines press upon George with their bayonets: each time his opponent fell lifeless at his feet. It was Pierre Munier who watched over his son—it was the faithful carabine that did its duty. All at once a terrible cry, which was heard clearly over the sounds of the grenades, the rattling of the musketry, and the screams and groans of the wounded and dying, issued from between decks, striking terror into the hearts of all:

“Fire!”

At the same instant a dense smoke issued from the after hatchway. One of the shells had burst in the captain's cabin, and had set fire to the frigate. At this terrible, unexpected, and ominous cry, every hand was as it were paralysed. Then the clear and commanding tones of Jacques's voice were heard:

“All on board the Calypso!”

Forthwith, with the same eagerness they had evinced in boarding the frigate, the privateer's men abandoned their ground, and thronging one over the other, clinging to every spar or rope that offered itself to their hands, they endeavoured to regain their ship, whilst Jacques and George, with a few of the most determined men, covered the retreat. Then it was the governor who now in his turn pressed forward to the assault, charging the privateer's men, and hoping to gain the deck of the Calypso at the same time as themselves; but those of the Calypso's crew who first regained their ship, darted aloft into the tops, and the hand grenades and bullets rained down anew. Ropes were thrown to those who still remained on board the frigate; every one seized a rope or stay. Jacques regained the deck: George remained behind. The governor approached him; he awaited his

attack. All at once a hand of iron seized him and pulled him backwards. It was Pierre Munier who watched over his son, and who for the third time, in the course of that eventful day, had saved him from almost certain death. Then a voice was heard, its clear loud note sounding distinct above the din of this terrible *mélée*:

“Brace round the fore-yard, hoist the jib, haul down the main tack, hard up with the helm!”

All these manœuvres, ordered with that powerful voice which commands passive obedience, were executed with such marvellous rapidity, that great as was the impetuosity displayed by the British in their pursuit of the privateer's men, they could not arrive in time to lash the two ships together. The brigantine, as though she had been endowed with instinct, seemed to comprehend the danger she incurred, and disengaged herself from her enemy by a vigorous effort; whilst the frigate, deprived of her foremast, continued to advance slowly, impelled only by the sails on her main and mizen masts. Then from the deck of the *Calypso* a terrible spectacle was visible. In consequence of the heat of the combat, the progress made by the fire on board the frigate had not been perceived, so that the moment when the cry of “Fire!” was heard, the conflagration had already made too great advance to be checked.

It was at this moment that the power of British discipline might be above all especially admired. In the midst of the smoke, now becoming denser every moment, the governor ascended the quarter-deck, and resuming his speaking trumpet, which he had kept suspended from his left wrist, he cried:

“Steady, men, steady! Let not a man move!”

Every man stopped.

“Out boats!” continued the governor.

In five minutes the jolly-boat, the two quarter-boats, and the launch were in the water.

“The jolly-boat and launch for the marines,” cried the governor; “the two quarter-boats for the crew!”

As the *Calypso* widened her distance from the frigate, the other commands were inaudible to those on board

the former ; but from their deck, the privateer's men could perceive the four boats filled with all that remained of the crew, except a few who, too much terrified to wait for the boats to be lowered, had jumped into the sea. The governor's stately form could be discerned descending the last over the ship's side, after casting a calm and steady glance around, to see that no one had been forgotten.

"Hoist out two boats!" cried Jacques, and forthwith two empty boats detached themselves from the Calypso's side, and floated lightly on the waves.

The sea at that moment presented a frightful spectacle. The four boats pulled clear of the burning vessel, whilst the rest of the crew swam towards the brigantine's boats. Then, motionless amid a whirlwind of smoke, the frigate blazed up fiercely. It was a spectacle so terrible that George felt the trembling hand of Sara placed upon his shoulder, and yet turned not to meet her gaze.

After pulling to a considerable distance, the boats ceased rowing, and every eye was bent upon the frigate. The smoke from the burning vessel became every instant more dense, and long snake-like tongues of fire might be seen gradually issuing from the ports and hatchways, climbing up the main and mizen masts, and devouring sails and spars. Then the shotted guns went off one by one, having become almost red hot. At length a terrible explosion was heard—the body of the ship opened like the crater of a vulcano—a mass of smoke and flame ascended to the skies, and a few minutes afterwards, through this dense cloud some fragments of masts, yards, and gear, might be seen falling into the water. It was all that remained of the Leicester.

"If I were unable to live with you, Sara," said George, turning round to his lovely bride, "that is how I should like to die."

THE END.



